Commentary

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After Los Angeles

How the Rioters Won

Midge Decter

The Legacy of the 60's

Charles Murray

Is White Racism the Problem?

Arch Puddington

Israel Watch: PBS Does It Again

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Losing the Peace

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Books in Review:

Norman Gall/Stephanie Gutmann/Allan Gerson/
Evelyn Toynton/Edward Norden

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Letters from Readers

The Gulf War

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Evidently displeased with President Bush's management of the war in the Gulf, . . . Angelo M. Codevilla ["Magnificent, But Was It War?," April] endeavors, albeit unconvincingly, to catalogue the purported errors of Bush's ways. Though he concedes implicitly that the state of affairs in the Gulf region is "better," Mr. Codevilla nevertheless remains frustrated, because Bush's objectives were not as extended as he might have preferred. . . . Saddam Hussein is still in power. . . . He was neither appeased nor replaced, and Mr. Codevilla views this as a disaster. Is it? . . .

Mr. Codevilla touches on an important matter without completing his analysis. He acknowledges, correctly, that American citizens would have liked to see Saddam Hussein "dead," but he does not address the concomitant question: how many of their sons and daughters were (are?) they predisposed to sacrifice in pursuit of that end? He offers no answer. Moreover, since intelligence-gathering has not yet reached the pinnacle of an exact science, it was perfectly reasonable for Mr. Bush—and his advisers—to project the possibility that Saddam Hussein might be replaced by a successor regime. It did not happen. Yet President Bush is not politically indictable for that failure.

Finally, Mr. Codevilla cites Clausewitz, who counseled that no war should be undertaken by a nation without its leaders first postulating means and ends. In my opinion, Bush was faithful to this prescription. His means passed the test of proportionality. Now let us consider whether his ends were accomplished.

Were Kuwait's borders restored? Was its territorial integrity sustained? . . . Was Saddam Hussein's attempt at extortion frustrated? Were nations the world over assured of continuing access to oil at reasonable world prices? Was Iraq's capacity to wage nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare crushed, if not as yet . . . totally eliminated? Was relative stability in the Middle East secured?

I submit that despite Mr. Codevilla's pessimism and disappointment, the foregoing questions are answerable in the affirmative.

ELLIOTT A. COHEN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Along with other critics of the Gulf War, Angelo M. Codevilla imagines an even greater victory if only President Bush had not stopped U.S. troops. He envisions the Iraqi military dissolving and the Iraqi people rising up to kill Saddam. Maybe his vision would have been realized. But, on the other hand, maybe the intact Iraqi divisions would have fought to defend Baghdad and other cities. In that case the United States could have chosen to continue carpet bombing, as in the battle for Kuwait, which would have killed many thousands of civilians. Or else the United States could have chosen restraint, and sent its troops into battle without full use of their firepower, as it did in Vietnam. Then Baghdad might have cost thousands of American lives. In other words, imaginary battles are easier than real ones.

Mr. Codevilla rightly deplores the fate of the Kurds and Shiites, and suggests that American air power might have defended them. But without the total victory he imagines, it is difficult to see how America could have suppressed Saddam's fury for long. He notes that an indefinite American commitment to defend the Saudis and others was impractical. But such an indefinite commitment to the Kurds and Shiites would have been even more difficult.

Among critics of the war, Mr. Codevilla is comparatively fair and sober. He acknowledges the victory and its benefits. Nonetheless, he and other critics judge the action by unrealistically high expectations. As battles go, America was well-led and fortunate in the Gulf. A nation should not ask too much from war.

ROD DECKER
Salt Lake City, Utah

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Angelo M. Codevilla, commenting on the aftermath of Desert Storm, . . . draws attention to the March 27, 1991 story in the New York *Times* reporting our betrayal

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of the rebellions against Saddam Hussein at the behest of our "Arab allies." But he omits the report in the *Times* (and the Washington *Post*) of April 2, 1991 that National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft went to the Middle East on March 26 (according to the *Post* account) for consultations that included "Saudi interest in the situation in Iraq and future relations between Saudi Arabia and Iraq under Saddam Hussein" (according to the *Times* account). The question is: did Scowcroft go for "consultations" or instructions?

The lead story in the Washington *Post* of April 2 opened as follows:

> Iraqi Kurdish rebels, pressed hard by relentless attacks from government forces, retreated into the mountains of northern Iraq yesterday as their leader, Massoud Barzani, urged the United States, Britain, and France to stop "genocide and torture against our people."

The plight of the Kurdish people was not deemed fit to print on the front page of the *Times* that day.... Quite clearly, we approved policies harmful to the Kurds. And we certainly approved policies harmful to Israel, demanding that it accept Scud attacks passively, and sitting back while yet another of its fierce enemies, Syria, augmented its own stockpile of missiles aimed at the Jewish state.

Mr. Codevilla also indicates that the President put American lives on the line to protect the ability of the Saudis (and their U.S. business partners) to ratchet up the price of oil, for Saudi purposes, and notwithstanding the lesson of Desert Storm that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia "can survive only" with our support. The title of Mr. Codevilla's article might more properly have been, "The Dual Loyalty of George Bush"; it suggests that the President has rather more concern about Saudi sensitivities and about the price of oil than either about the well-being of the American people or, indeed, American national honor....

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Angelo M. Codevilla's otherwise brilliant article is fatally flawed by one crucial omission: it does not deal at all with the U.S. contention that Iraq's forces were massing on the southern border of Kuwait for

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an immediate attack against Saudi Arabia.

There is a range of possibilities. The most straightforward is that there were genuine aerial and satellite photographs which showed a pre-invasion buildup massive enough to convince the Defense Department and the Saudi rulers that an imminent threat to Saudi Arabia existed. If that was so, much of Mr. Codevilla's narrative and argument loses its force. President Bush would have had valid reasons for changing his mind about letting Saddam Hussein get away with the rape of Kuwait.

The only reasons to justify his omission, then, would be either that Mr. Codevilla has cause to believe that the photographs were not genuine but were "edited," or that they did not really convince the Defense Department but were used to convince the Saudis, who were less sophisticated in the interpretation of high-altitude surveillance data.

If Mr. Codevilla had cause to distrust the official story, however, the omission would not be justifiable either. U.S. conduct would then be a case of acquiring war powers by fraud comparable only to the Tonkin Gulf incident. . . .

FELIX KAUFMAN
Ann Arbor, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I thought Angelo M. Codevilla's article in the April issue was magisterial. . . .

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York City

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA writes:

Elliott A. Cohen sees my central point: George Bush fought the Gulf War without regard to its natural end—the removal of the reason why we were moved to fight in the first place, namely, Saddam Hussein and his regime. But Mr. Cohen somehow concludes that Saddam's removal is a personal preference of mine. He concedes that killing Saddam would have been nice, but rhetorically asks how many American lives I would have been willing to sacrifice for what, he implies, would have been icing on the cake. "Were [not] Kuwait's borders restored?" and so forth, he asks. I remind Mr. Cohen and, alas, Mr. Bush that the distinction between ends and means is not a matter of personal preference. How would we judge a malpractice suit against a surgeon who removed all but the root of a tumor and then claimed that the operation had been a success because the patient felt better, who asked why he should have spilled more blood just to remove the last 10 percent of the malignancy, and who protested that removal of the tumor's root was a personal preference? Surely we would point out that the patient did not submit to the operation just to be cut open and sewn up again, but rather that if he agreed to shed any blood at all it was so he could be rid of his life-threatening problem. George Bush sacrificed hundreds of Americans and killed tens of thousands of Iraqis while going out of his way to preserve Saddam Hussein. We should all be asking: should *any* human life have been sacrificed *except* for the purpose of destroying Saddam and his regime? Note also that, had the U.S. government chosen the proper strategic objective—the destruction of Saddam's regime—the U.S. armed forces would not have had to fight the bulk of the Iraqi army. When Saddam sent his army to Kuwait, he left himself uncovered. It took all the combined brains of George Bush, Richard Cheney, and Colin Powell to reverse Douglas MacArthur's commonsense principle, "hit 'em where they ain't," and to concentrate on the target with the highest military resistance and the lowest long-term political consequences.

Rod Decker seems to agree that Saddam's survival renders impractical a long-term U.S. commitment to defend the Saudis (and of course the Kuwaitis). I don't disagree that it dooms the Kurds. But why then does he write that the overthrow of Saddam was an "unrealistically high" goal for the U.S.? His logic leads to the conclusion that Saddam's overthrow was the *only* proper goal.

Mr. Decker is mistaken about the possibility that Iraq's most powerful divisions would have fought to keep the U.S. out of Baghdad. They were elsewhere, had no air cover, and no means of interposing themselves between U.S. forces and Baghdad. In desert warfare armies without air cover are a hazard primarily to themselves. Carpet bombing of Iraqi cities would have been criminally useless under any scenario.

David R. Zukerman makes a good point. Although the U.S. news media eventually carried enough sickening pictures of the horrible consequences that George Bush's decision had for millions of Kurds and Shiites, the media clearly let Bush off the hook. They attributed to Bush a mistake at the margin rather than, as they should have, a fundamentally flawed policy. The reason for this is that while U.S. media executives will occasionally see evil in third-world dictators, principle and habit prevent them from concluding that the U.S. is ever justified in doing away with them. The media's points of reference—Mikhail Gorbachev, the European Left, and the European Community Commission—had strongly warned the U.S. against deposing Saddam. So while the media decried the bloody result of a botched war, they were hardly eager to explore the reasons why it had been botched. As for Israel, fashionable opinion now has stuck it into the same near-outlaw category as America itself.

Felix Kaufman asks how I could have ignored the administration's rationale for sending troops to the Gulf, namely, that intelligence photographs showed Iraq's forces "massing on the southern border of Kuwait for an immediate attack on Saudi Arabia." The answer is that I had no space to develop this point. If I had, my argument would have been as follows: intelligence photos showed that Iraqi troops began to dig in as soon as they got to Kuwait, and never stopped. There is no evidence of any kind that Saddam intended an attack on Saudi Arabia immediately, or ever. The Saudis did not initiate the request for U.S. troops. The Bush administration persuaded the Saudis to ask. The Saudis were much impressed by the pictures of Iraqi armored divisions in Kuwait. Those armored divisions had the capacity to invade Saudi Arabia. While Saudi foreign policy was quite capable of living with this situation, King Fahd, reasonably, preferred not to. He reasonably (but mistakenly) concluded that if the United States was willing to bring a quarter of a million men halfway around the globe, it would be for the purpose of getting rid of Saddam. It seems that neither the King nor the U.S. government made an effort to clarify what the troops were to do. (Between the summers of 1990 and 1992 the Saudis seem to have switched views on the desirability of overthrowing Saddam at least three times.)

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Did the Bush administration acquire war powers by a kind of fraud? Its pretenses were not so much false as they were empty. The administration sought power, not to serve a hidden agenda but while refusing to articulate one. Neither the Saudis, nor the U.S. Congress, nor, I suspect, George Bush himself would have agreed to wage a $70-billion war that would leave the Saudi and Gulf regimes less domestically legitimate than ever, an Iraq solidly in Saddam's hands, and a U.S. government that had shot its bolt in the region for a least a generation. My point is that a lack of intellectual clarity can have terrible consequences.

I thank Ernest van den Haag, and think that *he* is magisterial.

The Ex-Soviet Union

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Pipes's insightful article, "Russia's Chance" [March], is another example of his clear-eyed perspective when it comes to informing us about that empire of illusions and lies that was the Soviet Union. I found myself nodding in agreement at every paragraph, most especially when Mr. Pipes touched upon the subject of the "Big Lie" in which so many so-called Soviet experts colluded. Yet he was much too kind to the legions of messengers who, wittingly or unwittingly, spread the false message of those "Potemkin villages" to every corner of the free world. . . .

This is no convenient pronouncement afforded by hindsight, for the stark message about . . . the Soviet Communist aberration was being shouted for years from lonely outposts manned by true witnesses. Their shouts, however, were drowned out by the roar of those promoting the Big Lie, pointing accusing fingers, tossing out denigrating labels, or droning a chorus of rationalizations. At least now the stormy petrels and those who listened to them can stand before that mass grave, the Soviet empire, without having to bow their heads in shame.

The quasi-scientists who have grown accustomed to praying before the great altar of Moscow are well-entrenched within our great bastions of academia, the media, and government. Like the leftover *apparatchiki* of the ex-Soviet Union, they are still hanging on, holding out, and attempting to smother change. Their rearguard activity accounts for the continued glorification of all that is Russian at the expense of the Eastern European nations trying to free themselves. Justice will be served if the "tormented people" about whom Mr. Pipes writes finally have their day in the sun.

. . . I salute COMMENTARY as a sounding board for serious thinking.

ANDRES DURBAK
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I liked Richard Pipes's article, as usual, but I object to . . . his final point about the impossibility of applying scientific methods to the study of human behavior.

It is certainly true that the people who have attempted to play scientist in connection with international affairs have normally done badly, but the reason is not that science is useless. Rather, it is a combination of two factors: first, those attempting to do so tend to be very poor scientists, and, second, international affairs are a particularly difficult area. Among the reasons for the difficulty are the factors cited by Mr. Pipes in specifying where Sovietologists went wrong—among them, intellectual vanity and the desire to retain access to Communist-bloc countries.

Adam Smith was a professor of philosophy but quite properly regarded himself as a scientist when it came to studying economic behavior. Learning about human behavior through the application of scientific methods is not impossible, it is only difficult.

GORDON TULLOCK
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Let me express my appreciation to Richard Pipes for his largely accurate and often trenchant observations over the years with regard to the Soviet Union. . . .

However, when Mr. Pipes argues that "the breakdown of state authority has brought about the dissolution of society" in Russia, he has given us but a part of the truth. Russia has disintegrated because the state, having encroached upon

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and usurped the sovereign sphere of its people, has so isolated, fragmented, and atomized them that they are unable to . . . function organically. It is the *expansion* of state authority, going back to Peter the Great and even earlier, that has brought about this dissolution.

Mr. Pipes's approach and analysis are quintessentially "Western." They fail to take notice of, much less account for, the presence of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Russian history. In addition, where is the perspective of the Slavophiles? These are important omissions. The debate between the Westerners and the Slavophiles did not end when the more radical elements of the former group took control. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and others bear witness to the fact that the Slavophile position remains a viable, if not a tenable, one. And as for the neglect of the Russian Church, would anyone seriously attempt to understand the future of Poland without examining the Roman Catholic Church?

Mr. Pipes also posits the Western idea of the state as the only viable one by undermining and castigating patrimonial autocracy. Naturally, everyone knows that Western institutions like democracy and capitalism, notions such as efficiency and autonomy, are unassailable, that to challenge them is somehow a sign of immaturity, even retrograde or reactionary, especially in the present mood of Western triumphalism. (This is the *modern* world, remember?) Mr. Pipes calls Soviet Communism "mechanical," as indeed it was, but its mechanical aspects flowed from a Western mindset which was taken over from Europe by Russia's intellectuals during the 19th century. The "network of lateral bonds linking individuals and groups with one another, independently of the state . . ." that Mr. Pipes believes is Russia's foremost need, did exist in Russia under, of all things, patrimonial autocracy. Granted, elements of romantic longing colored Slavophile perceptions; all was not as rosy as they reported. However, their *Weltanschauung* has been unfairly neglected, and to ignore this possible avenue of development for Russia in favor of a Western path is to narrow the possibilities.

Finally, it is essential to distinguish between the Soviet legacy of patrimonialism where the people were stripped of their dignity as persons, where their responsibilities to one another and to God were thwarted at every step, and the patrimonialism that existed for hundreds of years prior to the wholesale introduction of ideas from the West. Institutional equilibrium did exist in pre-Petrine Russia, primarily due to the communal nature of the culture, a culture directly reflective of the Eastern Orthodox Church. In fact, it was the Church/community that kept the country together and essentially free from the revolutionary turmoil that plagued the West. Only with the breakdown of the Church and the communities it fostered did the people begin to define themselves by the state and its imperial demands.

ADRIAN R. VALENTINO
Fort Collins, Colorado

RICHARD PIPES writes:

I appreciate Andres Durbak's kind remarks about my article. The extraordinary disinformation spread year after year by a large body of generously financed academic specialists on the Soviet Union and Communism will certainly baffle future generations: it is probably without precedent in the history of social thought. To the best of my knowledge, few if any of them have either admitted their mistakes or analyzed their causes. This surely is the best indication that "social science" is no science.

I find it difficult to agree with Gordon Tullock that the failures of social science in regard to the Soviet Union were due to the poor quality of its practitioners and the difficulties inherent in studying international affairs. From my experience, Soviet experts are no worse than those found in the other branches of the social-science discipline—e.g., American studies, whose adepts have failed to foresee or explain the most dramatic developments of the past decades, be they student radicalism, the disintegration of the black community, or the decline of American competitiveness. True, access to reliable information on the closed Communist societies was harder to come by, but not so hard as to explain any of the egregious mistakes committed: one only had to spend a few hours in Soviet Russia to realize that the widely accepted claim that its standard of living was 40 percent of ours, laboriously arrived at by armies of economists, was a mirage.

I have no quarrel with Adrian R. Valentino's assertion that the expansion of state authority in Russia had "isolated, fragmented, and atomized" society: I rather thought that this is what I was saying. The Orthodox Church has little relevance in this context since, with rare exceptions, unlike the other Christian churches, it has steadfastly supported the state. As for its keeping Russia free of the "revolutionary turmoil that plagued the West"—I was under the impression that Russia had had a few savage rebellions during the centuries when the Church was free to exert its influence, as for example in the 17th century under Razin, the 18th under Pugachev, then again in 1905 and twice in 1917.

Louis Kahn

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Michael J. Lewis's article, "What Louis Kahn Built" [March], leaves out an important point of view. In common with much of today's literature on arts which are not fine arts, that is, which encompass function as well as aesthetics, Mr. Lewis does not say enough about the function of Louis Kahn's buildings. Since I had the misfortune of living in a Kahn building for two years, I can testify that the great man failed at many points to fulfill the (admittedly bourgeois) criteria of basic livability.

When I was first assigned a room in Erdman Hall at Bryn Mawr College, I looked forward to living in a building of unique design. When I found that the architect was considered a living legend (this was 1972), about whom the students had a corpus of anecdotes, my interest was piqued even further. It was with intense dismay that I discovered the shortcomings of his building.

One of them was the flat roof. Over a period of time, some portions settled faster than others, developing low spots which accumulated rain water. The roof had drain pipes, but the pipes themselves seem to have supplied mechanical support to the concrete, leaving the drains at high spots. Thus they failed to channel away the pools of water, which gradually leached their way through the roof and into the interior. . . .

Inside, the floors were sheathed with natural-finished wood which had originally resembled the floor of a basketball court. As water

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leaked onto these floors, the wood swelled, bulging upward and finally bursting into its component planks. By the time I was graduated in 1975, part of the floor had already been replaced by a prefabricated polyurethane-finished section which, it was hoped, might be less subject to dampness.

Then, too, the heating system was never quite right. The building seems to have had little insulation. Further, the heating system's balance and capacity were inadequate to keep up with losses to the outside during a typical Philadelphia winter. Luckily, I had a "warm" room, where the temperature rarely went below 65. Other students told me they had complained so many times that maintenance had sent someone to measure temperatures, and found readings in the 50's in several of the complainants' rooms.

On the whole, students still liked the building. It was the only coeducational dorm at Bryn Mawr in those days, and they also liked its layout, with large public rooms suitable for eating, parties, and dancing. . . . Stories about Kahn were part of the mythology of Erdman residents, in all of which he appeared as the well-intentioned artist whose original intent had been subverted by nameless villains. . . .

One such story was "The Tale of the Budget." Kahn's original budget suffered gigantic overruns. Rumors were that the big slabs of slate used to sheath the exterior of the building were difficult to get to the site from the quarry without breaking. . . . Instructed by the administrator (or perhaps the contractor) to economize, Kahn elected to delete a projected sheathing for the interior walls of the public rooms, and that is why the bare concrete walls have a pattern of evenly spaced holes.

Another story was "The Tale of the Rods." It was believed that, either as a means of cost control or because the contractor cheated, reinforcing rods were omitted from the concrete structure. This was the cause of the settling which caused the leaks. . . .

These stories might very well be true, leaving Kahn a frustrated hero whose vision was subverted by forces beyond his control. . . . It is true that the building was erected during a period of high inflation and it is also true that builders sometimes fail to carry out a designer's intentions, either deliberately or through ignorance. . . .

Thus, I am not necessarily saying that Louis Kahn was not a first-rate architect because Erdman Hall had functional defects. It is unclear how much responsibility he really bears for those problems. Even if the deficiencies could be proven to be the designer's fault, they may or may not be serious enough to unseat him as a leader among recent architects.

I am not even criticizing Mr. Lewis's article, for within the framework of accepted standards of scholarship, the article is a good one. Rather, it is those standards of scholarship which could stand improvement. The approach Mr. Lewis takes is that of the art historian. He analyzes the methods and the message, while saying little about the function of the object. This is fine with painting and sculpture. In architecture, I think this is turning one's priorities backward. A functional object must first fulfill its function; then we can consider whether it is successful as an artistic statement. . . . Mr. Lewis's article could have been improved by a visit to a few of Mr. Kahn's buildings and interviews with the occupants.

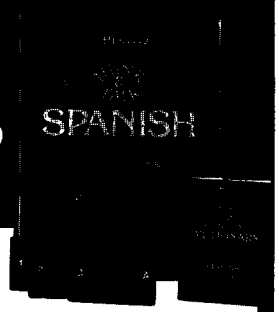
A. STEVEN TOBY
Highland Park, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The March issue of COMMENTARY, culturally, is a study in contrasts. On the one hand, you have Samuel Lipman, iconoclast, who, in "*Ghosts* and American Opera," smashes the idols of contemporary music by calling attention to the vacuousness that is music today—a music without melody and beauty and certainly without the passion that "darker" ages brought forth so readily. But contrasting this you have Michael J. Lewis, who shows that idolatry is not in fact dead. Like the symbol of the American flag which, through a conditioned reflex, evokes a powerful emotion pro or con depending on one's politics, Mr. Lewis throws up for us the buzz words to which the artsy crowd reflexively reacts.

The problem with Mr. Lewis's brand of emotion is that it has nothing to do with our engagement with the visual character of

"They couldn't believe an American actually spoke their language."



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architectural works. Whereas the true designers (and composers for that matter) created visual shapes with positive qualities, unified and coherent, allowing us to respond emotionally with the aid of our senses, today's architects and their acolytes talk a good game. And that is about all.

Louis Kahn lost some of his commissions, not only because he could not create to a budget, but because he could not produce architectural works that engaged the beholder's emotions. Years ago, in *Time* magazine, I believe, awful-looking brick-shaped buildings by Kahn were shown and he was quoted as saying, "These are beautiful, and I don't mean good-looking." He was not the person for an architecture of beauty—the truly lasting kind—or hasn't Mr. Lewis, art historian, noticed?

Anyway, you can put ideas of transcendence in a book. But the proof of stirring architecture is in the seeing, "with no need for any remoter charm or interest unborrowed from the eye," as someone phrased it. Unfortunately, Mr. Lewis is apparently steeped in the religion of art and just does not know how to relate to real visual artistry. . . .

DAVID BASCH
West Hartford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his interesting . . . article on Louis Kahn, Michael J. Lewis states that the project for a community for garment workers in Hightstown, New Jersey, was supported by the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), and by Albert Einstein.

David Dubinsky, the well-known president of the ILGWU at the time, told the story differently. He said that Einstein visited him at his office and asked for help with this project. At issue was the promise of a union firm in New York to supply the community in New Jersey with work. Dubinsky tried to explain to Einstein that this would mean diverting garments from the workers, permanently employed by the New York firm, to the factory in New Jersey, thus depriving them of their livelihood at this time of deep depression. A lively discussion ensued and finally Dubinsky said, "Dr. Einstein, when it comes to physics you are the professor; when it comes to garments I am the professor."

It might also interest your readers to know that Eleanor Roosevelt was a supporter of this community project.

HENOCH MENDELSUND
Bronx, New York

MICHAEL J. LEWIS writes:

A. Stephen Toby recommends first-hand inspection of Louis Kahn's work. Actually, I too lived in Kahn's Erdman dormitory as a student during the 1970's, although Mr. Toby could not have known this; more recently, I was able to rediscover the building while teaching at Bryn Mawr. His tale of mechanical failure and weather woes is accurate, and the patchwork repairs he describes have continued. Other Kahn buildings have suffered similar practical problems, particularly his Richards Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Toby is right to emphasize the functional side of architecture. I have always been amused at the way teachers of architecture privately acknowledge the physical problems of modernist architecture—leaky roofs, streaking on walls, persistent failure of mechanical systems—but absolutely disregard these as criteria for evaluating the buildings and their architects. Modernist architecture, like so many utopian ideologies, is invariably judged by its promises, not its performance.

David Basch's accusations of idolatry are misplaced. It is true that Kahn enjoys a kind of mythical guru-like status, but rather than promoting this myth, I tried to expose its roots and its extent. In particular, I suggested that Kahn's reputation ultimately rests on his insulation from commercial practice. Critics since the 1930's have invariably been hostile to the commercial nature of America, presenting a model of architecture that has no room for capitalism, competition, or personal taste or preference. Certain types of architecture, such as social housing or institutional buildings, are sanctioned, their architects studied and celebrated; other types, such as the private house or, worse, the commercial skyscraper, are scorned, written off as the product of the arbitrary whim of the client rather than progressive theory. Consequently, entire periods are dismissed as corrupt, as was once the case with the 1920's and is now the case with the 1980's. Kahn, whose work was institutional, academic, or governmental but almost never commercial in nature, was tailor-made for critical adulation. This has endeared him to critics but makes him an inappropriate model for architecture students who, after all, must contend with advertising, individual taste, and market pressures. Such was the nature of my analysis—and I can assure Mr. Basch that the artsy crowd does not "reflexively react" to this kind of discussion.

Clearly Mr. Basch is disappointed that my article was not a general polemic against modern architecture. But if I were to write such a polemic, I would surely not begin with Kahn, who repeatedly criticized modern architecture for its absence of poetry, lack of feeling for material, and detachment from history.

In any case, I am cheered by both these letters, and I take them to be a healthy sign of public skepticism about the increasingly threadbare claims of modern architecture.

Finally, I thank Henoch Mendelsund for his interesting remarks. According to the late Norman Rice, Louis Kahn's classmate in architecture school, Kahn claimed to have had a virtually identical exchange with Einstein over Hightstown. Perhaps he borrowed Dubinsky's anecdote for himself?

Daughters and Sisters

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have been reading COMMENTARY for some time now, and while I do not always understand the history and meaning behind many of the articles on Judaism, never have I read anything so bizarre as Leon R. Kass's "Regarding Daughters and Sisters" [April]. Mr. Kass's argument, that if we all abstain from sexual intercourse, romance and womanhood will return, is absurd. Think of all the lives ruined by confusing the longings of sex with marriage. Woman unknown brought us the strange creations of *Playboy* on the one hand, and Doris Day on the other; who wants to return to either? The pill has let us come to grips with ourselves. What has failed here is not the morality of abstinence and what it might recreate, but our own institutions of church and state. T. S. Eliot's Prufrock has a message, and no amount of Druid worship can change it.

J.M. BLACK III
Woodside, California

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The Rape of Dinah" by Leon R. Kass is convoluted, psychotic b.s. It calls to mind the young woman who went to Mike Tyson's hotel room at midnight. If Dinah went to the city alone, she knew she was going to get "bleeped." The acts of the brothers are foul and unpardonable in light of the prince's later conduct.

GABRIEL GLANTZ
Plantation, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Leon R. Kass subtitles his article, "The Rape of Dinah," although the Bible says no more than,

> And Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her; and he took her and lay with her and humbled her.

If "took" means "raped," he is correct, but there is always the doubt—did she or didn't she?

At any rate, Mr. Kass moves along with an interesting analysis of what followed the defilement. Old man Hamor appraises the situation and decides to make amends to Dinah's family and to convince them that his son loves Dinah and wants to be her husband. . . .

Jacob's sons then lay down the conditions for a settlement, including the demand that all of Hamor's male adults submit to circumcision. Hamor agrees, and persuades his male adults to undergo the circumcision.

What happens then is one of the most shameful episodes in biblical history. While the newly circumcised males are incapacitated, they are slaughtered by Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, who also

> took their flocks and their herds and their asses . . . and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.

This deception, entrapment, massacre, and plunder are in no way rationalized in the Bible. Jacob acknowledges the shame, telling his sons, "Ye have troubled me, to make me odious unto the inhabitants of the land," and expresses fear that his sons' actions may bring destruction upon his house.

But Mr. Kass then coasts to a remarkable conclusion:

> We are inclined to believe, with Jacob's sons, that a culture that will make war to defend the virtue of its women, against a culture that dishonors other people's women, proves itself—by this very fact of fighting—to be not only superior in justice but also more fit to survive and flourish.

What a sense of values! The hair-splitting and casuistry in this evaluation not only insult the intelligence of readers but also manifest the hubris and arrogance of thinking that Jews can do no wrong. Shocking!

WILLIAM STERN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a husband and father of daughters, like Leon R. Kass himself, I was eager to read his article. I looked forward to comparing feelings and to gaining new understanding about a young woman who is the victim of a sexual attack. Alas, I was disappointed. Instead of focusing on Dinah and *her* feelings—as I expected and hoped for because of the article's title and its opening paragraphs—Mr. Kass is concerned primarily with the feelings of Dinah's brothers and father. He deals mainly with Simeon and Levi, who are but two of her six full brothers, . . . and with Jacob, who remains silent and apparently passive until the end of the story when he makes but one statement directed explicitly to Simeon and Levi. . . .

As analyst of the story of Dinah's rape, Mr. Kass ascribes only one emotion—shame—to Dinah, and does not indicate how he arrived at that one. Note, as he does, that the story's narrator never ascribes any emotions directly to Dinah. The narrator only uses specifically negative words in Genesis 34:2 (he took/humbled her), 34:5 (he defiled her), and 34:7 (he committed a vile deed). Nevertheless, Mr. Kass's fatherly sensitivity and imagination are severely limited if "shame" is all he can ascribe to a raped Israelite "damsel" who has been taken, lain with, and defiled and then kept from her family in the house of the rapist. Mr. Kass is so concerned with the social and political aspects of rape, as he indicates by the polemic which ends his article, that he fails to note that Dinah might feel fearful, insecure, exhausted, angry, weak, vulnerable, homesick, imprisoned, and finally grateful to Simeon and Levi for liberating her from her attacker.

Mr. Kass deals in generalities, saying that Dinah suffers terrible psychic, social, and spiritual consequences. Instead of considering the specifics involving the raped maiden, he explores the sociopolitical consequences of rape on Jacob's tribe and then speculates on some of the causes of rape and other sexual matters in today's American society. Thus, ironically, he does exactly the same thing the narrator and Jacob do, for which he faults them. For Mr. Kass, the story of the rape of Dinah is essentially a launching pad for expounding on the sexual ills of American society today. . . .

Although Dinah performs only one act ("went out") in the entire story (her only verb is provided in the very first word of the Hebrew text) and does not speak at all . . ., surely she deserves more attention from a modern father of daughters who tells us that the Deuteronomic decree of death by stoning "never seemed to [him] too cruel or excessive a punishment" for the crime of rape. For example, since he is correct in noting that Dinah might never have married or given birth to children, Mr. Kass might have inquired whether Dinah herself felt defiled and contaminated and whether she was conflicted because of her sexuality and attractiveness to a non-Israelite. In short, as a husband-father analyzing the story of the rape of Dinah, Mr. Kass might have dwelt on what and how the young woman felt. What were the consequences of the rape for her?

With paternal understanding and insight Mr. Kass could have helped us, and me in particular, to understand and feel for Dinah. Instead, he took out his soapbox and shouted sociopolitical ideology which weakened his interpretation of the text still further. . . . Chapter 34 of Genesis deserves more and better regarding daughters and sisters.

RONALD T. HYMAN
Highland Park, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I have tried to live my life as a reverent and virtuous daughter and mother (now almost sixty-five years old). I have also tried to imbue my beloved children with a sense of their people's heritage.

But I did not always have the sense that I was on the right path—too many of the contemporary values kept (keep) getting in the way.

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It is very difficult, in the face of so much glaring competition, to imbue young people with the sense of "sexual self-restraint and sexual self-respect" that Leon R. Kass talks about in his article. I plan to distribute copies of the article to my three sons and one daughter. I believe they too will agree with Mr. Kass's urgent call for a "deeper understanding of sexuality" because, like him, they too care about their future and the family happiness they one day hope to know. But they will be the first to point out that "it's not easy, Mom."

Many thanks for publishing such a meaningful article.

RUTH KATZ
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

LEON R. KASS writes:

Why is it that all my male correspondents take me to task, while the one woman applauds? Not that the men are in agreement: one wecomes the overthrow of chastity and the emancipation of sex; a second thinks rape should go unpunished if the rapist later proposes marriage; a third even doubts that Dinah was raped, so horrified is he that her brothers sought to avenge her; while the fourth is therapeutically more interested in the feelings of rape victims than in what he and I might do—politically, culturally, and morally—to prevent rape from happening. Are there really no longer any men simply outraged by rape who are willing to defend their women against it?

Only someone who lives in Woodside, California, could mistake the teachings of Judaism for "Druid worship." Still, J.M. Black hovers over the right question, the connection between "the longings of sex" and marriage. But he first confuses sex and eros. What is it that the soul really wants in these matters? Does eros really seek only a transient electrical discharge in the brain's pleasure center, prompted by appropriate venereal stimulation? If this is the teaching of "the pill," Mr. Black's thinking needs a drug-free environment. Romance and genuine love depend absolutely on the restraint and channeling of animal lust ("the fig leaf"). The transcendent longings of human eros reach for something beyond us, something whole and enduring, something beyond the fleshly concerns of this mortal coil. Such a longing is for many of us at least partly satisfied in procreation, in the generous and creative acts of renewing human possibility and human longing. Marriage and stable family life are the singularly appropriate conditions for this venture in perpetuation, and the laws and customs of Judaism (and other deeply wise traditions) seek to provide these conditions. Think about it, Mr. Black: why are there so few Jewish rapists? Why, until the present emancipated generation, has the Jewish household been unsurpassed as a nursery for the rearing of decent and respectful men and women? Can the same be said of the Californicators?

Gabriel Glantz would no doubt regard my reprimanding his vulgar incivility as "foul and unpardonable," in light of his later serious question about Dinah's culpability. But he needs to learn to read even more than he needs to learn his manners. I made it quite clear that I believe Dinah herself to be (doubly) innocent: guiltless in motive, and naively ignorant of the evils that might lurk in the hearts of *men*. But, as this story shows, terrible things happen to innocent women who wander into places where women are not respected. Surely, this is not "b.s."

We forget that it is only the hard-won triumph of civilization that restrains male predation; we take for granted the respectful treatment of women and regard their violation as an unnatural event. But consider the uninstructed ways of men, for example, as presented earlier in Genesis. In Egypt, Pharaoh's men round up every beautiful woman for his harem, killing their husbands if necessary. In Sodom, the men of the town are set to attack sexually even Lot's stranger-guests, until Lot offers them instead his virgin daughters. Those of us who truly *regard*—i.e., respect and esteem—our daughters and sisters should still warn them of the dangers of traveling unescorted in strange cities in foreign lands—and in all-too-familiar cities here at home. We should, of course, also still forcefully teach our sons to behave like gentlemen toward all women, which includes, among other things, being willing to defend their sisters from attack (and sexual harassment).

William Stern, a careless reader, is so eager simply to condemn the brothers' violent revenge that he wants us to doubt that Dinah was raped. But the text he quotes couldn't be plainer: Dinah was not only "taken," Dinah was *defiled*. The verb *'ânâh* means "to bring low"—to abase, humble, defile, ravish—and always denotes maltreatment and humiliation. It is used especially in connection with sexual offenses. Defilement is a fact, it is not a state of mind. Should it be ignored? Mr. Stern does not understand that justice and necessity, especially in the face of rapacious neighbors, might require harsh and even morally problematic measures. He ignores my numerous comments about the "horror" and "barbaric cruelty" of the brothers' attack. He mistakenly treats Jacob's speech of fear concerning possible reprisals as if it were a moralistic condemnation. He quotes my conclusion, but without either its textual support or my qualifications. And he himself has no answer to the text's question (and the story's last word), "As a harlot should one deal with our sister?" Would you, Mr. Stern, have traded your sister to the rapist for a good deal in cattle?

Ronald T. Hyman's sensitive letter complains, I am sorry to say, that I did not write the article he wanted written—an article that would focus mainly on the feelings of the woman who has already been raped. But that is not the task I set myself, which was rather to understand the *inner meaning* of the crime of rape and its relation to the meaning of our sexuality, and also to consider how we should educate and care for daughters and sisters in these matters, in order, among other goals, to prevent their sharing the fate of Dinah. True, it would have been easy for me to try to fill in the text's silences and to speculate on Dinah's feelings and her inner life. Perhaps I should have done so. (By the way, when I said that "Dinah has shame," I was describing not so much her emotions as her objective condition—of abasement, defilment, disgrace. In this I was but paraphrasing the text.) But I was trying to learn from the text, rather than to correct it in light of our own preoccupations and prejudices.

Today's focus on the treatment of rape victims, and our elaborate psychological conversations, all take the occurrence of rape for granted. But precisely this concentration on feelings, albeit necessary, subjectivizes the crime and prevents us from focusing on what

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makes it inherently evil, feelings or no feelings, and on what can be done to prevent it. The biblical story, precisely by *not* subjectivizing the subject, may be able to teach us something we have forgotten—namely, that how a culture *regards* the honor of its daughters and sisters is crucial for both its survival and their flourishing.

Mr. Hyman's concern with the psyche of the victim prevents him from learning from this story the interconnection among the sociopolitical attitudes toward women, harlotry, and rape. Thus, he fails to see the connection between the Dinah story and our current crisis in sexual mores. Women today may have gained new rights, but they are losing our high regard for them *as women*, daughters of Chavah (Eve), the mothers of all living (*chai*). Small wonder that the modern-day Shechemites are having their way with them. And the sensitive men sit on the sidelines and wring their hands, wanting only to know what the women are feeling.

I thank Ruth Katz for her kind and generous comments and urge her to remind her children, as was said long ago, Nothing good is easy.

Leonard Jeffries

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There was one small but important error of fact in Philip Gourevitch's otherwise accurate and insightful article on Leonard Jeffries ["The Jeffries Affair," March] and, secondarily, myself.

Mr. Gourevitch omitted the third and most significant charge I brought against City College, namely, that the president had set up a committee to determine whether my writings might constitute "action unbecoming a professor," the language in my employment contract which triggers discipline. (These writings, which the president evidently took to constitute prima-facie evidence of incompetence to teach, were a letter to the editor of the New York *Times*, a letter to the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association*, and a book review in an Australian magazine of opinion.) Not surprisingly, the court found this committee, which sat for nine months and produced at the end of that time a three-page report, an obvious attempt to silence and intimidate me.

The committee was also nominally constituted to investigate Leonard Jeffries, but since Jeffries has written nothing, there was nothing to investigate. It was clear to all concerned that the committee was formed to put the heat on me, Jeffries's name being mentioned only for cosmetic reasons and out of a desire not to appear shamelessly inconsistent.

MICHAEL LEVIN
City College-CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I disagree with Philip Gourevitch when he writes:

> It is not through the logic of multiculturalism, or political correctness, or affirmative action that [Leonard] Jeffries holds on at City College. It is through the power of intimidation.

Mike Tyson, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and John Gotti might be better able to intimidate, but they are not tenured professors and chairmen of academic departments. Jeffries has that power, and he has support on campuses throughout the nation. The reason lies in affirmative action and its double standards. How many departments are headed by people who, like Jeffries, have published nothing of academic quality? Just how did Jeffries become a tenured professor and chairman of a department at City College?

The answer is to be found in liberalism. The affirmative-action mentality which demands that black students be admitted to universities even if they are ill-prepared, and that black professors be hired and promoted even if they are professional propagandists rather than professional scholars, has provided Jeffries and his imitators with prestige, tenure protection, and economic privilege. The double-standard Democrats and their liberal Republican allies have allowed many Jeffries-like students and professors to flourish.

The problem is not Jeffries . . . ; the problem is affirmative action, quotas, goals, and timetables. The problem is not a single charlatan, but liberal policies that make charlatanism inevitable.

HUGH MURRAY
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

PHILIP GOUREVITCH writes:

Michael Levin is right to draw attention to the third plank of his

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case against City College, and that key phrase of tenure contracts which cites "action unbecoming a professor" as grounds for dismissal. Mr. Levin's free-speech fight has tended to obscure the fact that the key complaints against Leonard Jeffries have to do with actions not protected as intellectual discourse. City College President Bernard Harleston viewed Levin's "racialist" writings as such actions, and Mr. Levin had to sue in order to correct him. In Jeffries's case, the unbecoming behavior consists of bogus scholarship and shoddy pedagogy—including the teaching of patent lies, *ad-hominem* racist attacks on fellow professors, the issuing of an alleged death threat, and a rap sheet of slurs and acts of intimidation too lengthy to reiterate here. City College's refusal to take steps against Jeffries suggests a bizarre concept of what becomes a professor, and indicates a racial double standard that may be maddening to Michael Levin, but should be particularly insulting to blacks.

Hugh Murray seems to suggest that Mike Tyson and John Gotti would not now be behind bars if they had had academic tenure. (As for Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has not been charged with or convicted of any public wrongdoing that I know of, he could probably land any number of tenured professorships at the flex of a bicep—anti-white-European-conservative-beefcake quotas notwithstanding.) But what really distinguishes Tyson and Gotti from Jeffries is that neither of those tabloid villains was able to awaken the fear of a riot in the hearts of those whose job it is to discipline them. At City College that is precisely what Leonard Jeffries has done, and he has not done it by cogent liberal argument—he himself is not, after all, a liberal—but by bullying and demagoguery.

Mr. Murray's claim that Jeffries's outrageous behavior is the logical outcome of liberal social policy overstates the case. As I wrote, such an argument is the rhetorical analogue of dubbing David Duke the true and ultimate expression of today's Republican party. One need not embrace liberalism or its fallout in our schools to recognize that Jeffries is fundamentally at odds with a liberal agenda. Nor is it negligible that some of the strongest denunciations of Jeffries came from liberals, Democrats, and affirmative-action advocates, from Mario Cuomo to Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. to Cornel West, a black Marxist professor of philosophy at Princeton.

Mr. Murray's slaphappy allusion to untold numbers of "Jeffries-like" characters swaggering around the campuses is also inaccurate. There is plenty of mischief afoot on our campuses, but Jeffries is a blessedly unique phenomenon in academia, and City College is run by an uncommonly spineless administration. That is the real problem in this case. Crackpot academics predated liberalism, and firm responses to misconduct have generally continued in the wake of affirmative action. But it was only after narrowly surviving a vote of no-confidence by the decidedly liberal faculty senate at City College in April, that President Bernard Harleston finally made the simple move of asking the trustees not to renew Jeffries's chairmanship. Sadly, that much-celebrated development achieves little. Jeffries remains in the saddle and has taken to sending out disciples to disrupt black-Jewish gatherings around New York. The ball is still in Harleston's court. Instead of appealing the Levin ruling, he should set his lawyers the honorable task of stripping Jeffries of the mantle of tenure.

The Historical Jesus

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is an indication of Hyam Maccoby's indifference, if not hostility, to Christianity that in his review of John P. Meier's *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* [Books in Review, April], he fails to call a spade a spade. Meier's rejection of "the historical truth of the Virgin Birth" is not, as Mr. Maccoby would have it, an act of daring or truth-loving iconoclasm; rather, it is an act of heresy. Thought to its logical conclusion, the denial of the dogma of the Virgin Birth implies the denial of the fundamental teaching of Christianity, namely, that Jesus Christ is the Incarnate God. The teaching of the Virgin Birth is inseparable from the teaching of the Incarnation.

Indeed, this is Matthew's point in referring to Isaiah 7:14. New Testament scholarship has shown (see almost any Bible commentary) that Matthew accepted the dogma of the Virgin Birth from a source independent of Isaiah. He refers to Isaiah to confirm that Jesus is the one foretold by Scripture, and not, as Mr. Maccoby and Meier hold, to prove that Mary was a virgin before and after giving birth. This point is of capital importance. Matthew's intention is not to verify what later will become a dogma of catholic (that is, Orthodox and Roman Catholic) Christianity; rather, it is to show the manner in which God keeps His promise to man, that God will be with us.

The "historical truth of the Virgin Birth" is an article of faith for catholic Christianity, for which there is, to be sure, some foundation in history; but it is accepted finally on faith. It is thus absurd for Mr. Maccoby to affirm that "the historian can conclude only that the Virgin Birth is a legend (and that therefore Jesus' father was in fact Joseph)." The historian *as such* concludes nothing of the kind, for the simple reason that it falls outside his sphere of competence as a historian to deny an article of faith. Meier, as one who may have lost or otherwise rejected his faith, may conclude that Jesus was in fact the son of Joseph, and not the son of God; but he did not conclude this on the basis of his historical research. . . .

The arguments given by Meier (and evidently accepted by Mr. Maccoby) against the Virgin Birth, based upon the meanings of the Greek words *adelphos* and *parthenos*, are inconclusive, or are based upon false premises. They certainly do not prove that Jesus had brothers who were the offspring of Joseph and Mary. Bauer and Arndt's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* states that *adelphos* not only means "brother," but also may "designate masculine relatives of various degrees." Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* gives "brother," or more generally, "a near kinsman," as the primary meaning. These two sources also concur in giving "virgin," or "maiden," that is, an unwed, and presumably virginal, young woman, as the primary meaning of *parthenos*. The fact that Genesis 34:3 refers to Dinah as *parthenos* after she had been raped proves nothing. Rape is by that definition a violation not only of a woman's person, but also of her will. It would have been curious, if not altogether heartless, for the author of Genesis to imply that Dinah had ceased to be maidenly even

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though it was against her will. . . .

The reference to Meier as an "iconoclastic Christian scholar [who] must [nevertheless] preserve the dogma of Jesus' alienation from the Jewish society of his day" shows Mr. Maccoby's ignorance concerning Christianity's understanding (especially in the Orthodox Church) of Jesus as the one who came, not to repudiate Judaism, but to fulfill it. Even a superficial reading of the Book of Acts will show that the first Christians regarded themselves as faithful Jews, witnessing to the fulfillment of the scriptural prophecies in the person of Jesus Christ as Messiah.

There is also ample evidence that early Christian worship looked to synagogue worship as its normative principle. This does not mean that the first Christians added nothing new to their worship; but these new additions were understood in the light of their belief that Jesus had completed or perfected the law. It is similarly clear from the Gospels and the Book of Acts that neither Jesus nor his disciples rejected the Temple and the synagogue. On the contrary, they worshipped regularly. Indeed, the first great controversy in the Church, settled by a council at Jerusalem, concerned whether Gentiles could be received into the Church without keeping the law. There were many, including some of the Apostles themselves, who believed that one must keep the Mosaic law in order to be a Christian. It was, as Luke tells us, at a Gentile church, namely, the church at Antioch, that the believers were first called "Christians." . . .

There are many other specific things about Mr. Maccoby's review and Meier's book that serious Christians will find objectionable; but in general, the most objectionable thing is his evident hostility toward Christianity. In this, he reminds one of Spinoza's hostility toward Judaism. Whereas Spinoza taught liberal theologians that they might safely dismiss as pious myth the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, Mr. Maccoby attempts to liberate his reader from the myth of the Virgin Birth, offering in its place various explanations culled from comparative religion and cultural anthropology. . . .

SCOTT R. STRIPLING
North Andover, Massachusetts

HYAM MACCOBY writes:

Scott R. Stripling's letter is a marvel of pedantry and complacency. While John P. Meier is struggling to emerge from the Middle Ages, Mr. Stripling makes no such effort, even accusing both Meier and myself of "heresy." It is hardly possible to argue with someone so untouched by modern scientific New Testament research. He evidently does not regard the New Testament as consisting of human documents, which may contain contradictions or mythical elements, but as totally inerrant. It may be worth pointing out to him, however, that if, in the case of Dinah, *parthenos* means "maidenly," even though she was physically not a virgin, Mr. Stripling could hardly avoid applying the same reasoning to Mary herself, in which case *he* would be in mortal danger of falling into heresy.

Mr. Stripling's thesis that Jesus was not alienated from the Jewish society of his day is one that I have urged myself in many books and articles. But I have had to argue this against the grain of the Gospels which, while giving unconscious proof of Jesus' essential Jewishness, place far more stress on his alleged alienation. I need hardly remind Mr. Stripling of the alleged conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees on matters of Jewish law, of the alleged charge of blasphemy made against him at the alleged Sanhedrin trial, of the alleged denunciation of him by the Jews to the Roman authorities leading to his crucifixion, and the alleged demand of the Jewish masses to Pilate to crucify him. All these elements of alienation I regard as fictional, but Mr. Stripling presumably does not.

I also agree (and have argued in full in my book, *The Mythmaker*) that the Jerusalem Church was not alienated from Judaism. But this depends on an appreciation of the fact that the Jerusalem Church, like its successors the Ebionites, did not regard Jesus as God, did not regard his crucifixion as an atonement for sin, did not practice the Eucharist, and did not regard Jesus as having founded a new religion. These views of the Jerusalem Church were irreconcilable with those of the Pauline Church, which, however, promoted the fiction (found especially in the Book of Acts, though with many inconsistencies) that the Jerusalem Church finally accepted the Pauline doctrine and thus aligned itself with Pauline alienation from Judaism.

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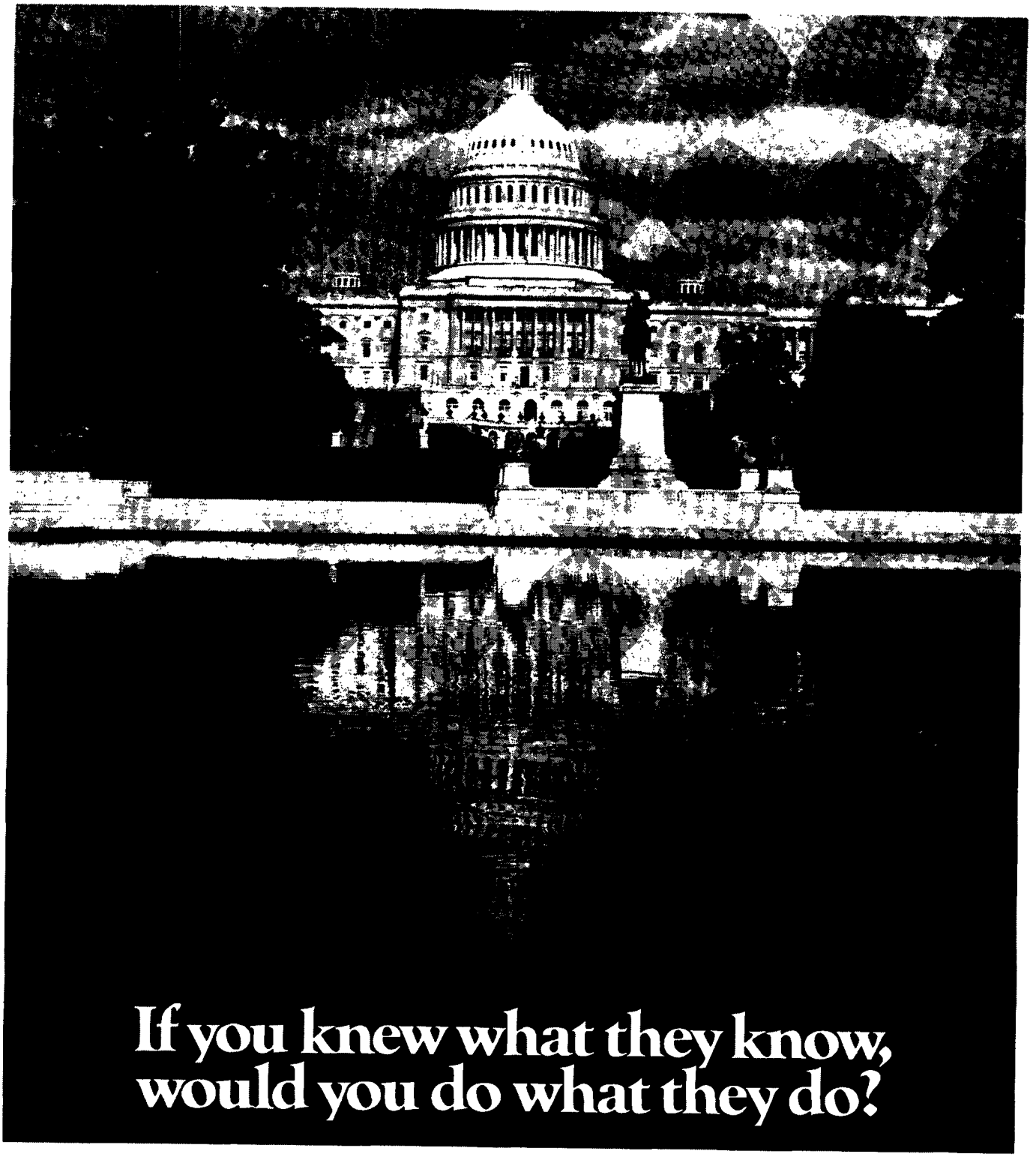

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How the Rioters Won

Midge Decter

In August 1965, the late Bayard Rustin, one of the major civil-rights leaders of that day, traveled to Los Angeles to see for himself the results of the massive outbreak of violence, arson, and looting that was henceforth to be known simply as "Watts." In the course of the melee, 34 people had been killed, more than 1,000 injured, and local businesses and services almost totally wiped out. As Rustin would later write,* during his tour he came upon a street-corner meeting at which a twenty-year-old unemployed black man was shouting, "We won! We won!"

"'How have you won?'" Rustin reported challenging the young man. "'Homes have been destroyed, Negroes are lying dead in the streets, the stores from which you buy food and clothes are destroyed. . . .'"

"'We won,'" came the answer, "'because we made the whole world pay attention to us. The police chief never came here before. The mayor always stayed uptown.'"

Rustin, though no sympathizer with violence, black or any other kind, was persuaded. He most certainly did not condone the behavior of the Watts rioters, but he did in the end conclude that Watts deserved to be dignified as a "manifesto":

> The first major rebellion of Negroes against their own masochism . . . carried on with the express purpose of asserting that they would no longer quietly submit to the deprivation of slum life.

Today, some 27 years later, in the wake of a riot in a section of Los Angeles not all that far from Watts which left nearly twice as many dead and injured, that young man's declaration of victory has taken on more meaning than was ever dreamed of in Bayard Rustin's philosophy.

The story of the many riots which have erupted in the inner cities of America since the mid-60's, including this most recent one in South-Central Los Angeles, is invariably quite simple. First there is a putative "cause." Often the claimed incitement is no more than a soon forgotten attempted arrest, or perhaps an automobile accident; only very rarely is it something as historically weighty as the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., or as loaded as, in this case, the acquittal of four police officers known to have brutalized a black man (indeed, seen doing so on videotape by the whole country). Next, some individual or group finds the occasion a sufficient reason for a bit of avenging mayhem in the form of a fire or a broken window or two. And then, as they say, all hell breaks loose: one fire leads to another; broken windows and doors offer the temptation of the goods arrayed behind them; a push leads to a beating which leads to general bloodlust which leads to gunfire; and finally the normally peaceable are drawn irresistibly by the lure of free merchandise, and full-scale looting commences. What brings all this to an end? External force, without doubt, but probably to some extent also sheer fatigue, the goods all carried off, the fires all damped.

Obviously, not all eruptions of the inner city follow this pattern in every precise particular. Neighborhood geography, for instance, is an important influence on both the direction and velocity of a rioting mob. But certain general conditions do usually seem to be present—reasonably warm weather, for example, and a critical mass of young people, particularly young men, hanging around with nothing much to do.

Given that there have been many such riots in the past quarter of a century, it might seem odd that the whole country should have responded to the outbreak of April 29-May 3 in Los Angeles with such a flood of social theory and such a fury of sociological chatter—quite as if everyone, white and black, were being confronted by a new phenomenon in need of fresh explanation.

To be sure, the Los Angeles riot was exceptionally murderous and destructive: perhaps, as has been claimed in a weird parody of local boosterism, this will even turn out to have been the biggest and worst riot ever. Moreover, to reinforce

Midge Decter is a Distinguished Fellow of the Institute on Religion and Public Life in New York City and a long-time contributor to Commentary. Her article, "Looting and Liberal Racism," written after the New York City blackout of July 1977 (and published in September of that year), was widely discussed and reprinted.

* "The Watts 'Manifesto' and the McCone Report," Commentary, March 1966.

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the images of mayhem broadcast night and day on television—pictures of beating and burning, shooting and stealing, coming at the audience with the immediacy that has been made possible by the technology of the camcorder—there has emerged a new cadre of journalists who seem positively blown away by the discovery that all is not well among America's inner-city blacks. Add to this the fact that we are in a presidential election year, a time when politicians, too, are given to unearthing *de novo* each of our very old and long-accustomed problems, and you have the ingredients of an even more voluble round of the ritualistic position-taking which has come to constitute the nation's normal discussion of race policy.

STRANGELY enough for an event of this kind, there is no dispute about what actually happened. On Wednesday, April 29, at 3:30 P.M., the jury in the trial of the four Los Angeles policemen who had beaten up a young black man named Rodney King brought in a verdict of not guilty on all charges (except for one charge against one defendant, on which they had been deadlocked). "Today the system has failed us," the mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, declared, and anticipating what might happen, he also pleaded for calm.

Within an hour and a half, however, billows of smoke could already be seen rising from South-Central L.A., and soon after that, also from nearby districts, particularly the one called Koreatown. Before quiet was to be restored, days later, fires would be set, and some looting would be done, in places far beyond the boundaries of South-Central L.A., places as distant and supposedly out of reach as Beverly Hills to the north and Long Beach to the south. But the main violence and damage were confined (as usual) to the slums where the rioters themselves lived and/or did their shopping.

In any case, by Thursday the smoke was so dense that the air-traffic controllers at Los Angeles International Airport had to close all but one runway. Highways were clogged with frightened people trying to get out of town. Bus and train service stopped. Schools and offices and stores were closed throughout the city. In other words, here were the makings of looters' heaven.

Athough Mayor Bradley had been apprehensive enough from the first moment to plead for calm, and though things soon got sufficiently out of hand to force him to declare an emergency, the police were amazingly scarce. On the first day, a small contingent of cops made its way to a spot near the now-famous intersection of Normandy and Florence, credited with being the riot's "epicenter," but after a brief scuffle with some gang members, the police retreated. Not until the next day would there be even a semblance of force, which by the end would include California National Guardsmen and federal troops called out by the President. Without the police there could be no firefighting, either; for in accordance with the tradition established in the urban ghettos during the 60's, firemen were assaulted with bricks and bullets as they attempted to go about their work.

It seems reasonable to suppose that at least some policemen, out of solidarity with their four newly-acquitted colleagues, took a certain satisfaction in leaving the cop-hating denizens of South-Central L.A. to fend for themselves. But whether or not their absconding had something in it of *Schadenfreude*, the famously zealous Los Angeles Police Department was absent for a long and what might have been a critically helpful time; and once the cops were in evidence, particularly in the effort to control the orgy of looting which had almost immediately broken out, they were somewhat less than fully energetic and efficient.

Meanwhile the entire nation, which thanks to television news had for months been witnessing and rewitnessing the pummeling of Rodney King, was now, again thanks to television, watching over and over a group of young blacks pull a white truckdriver out of the cab of his truck, throw him on the ground, and attempt first to kick his head in and then to beat it in with a brick. This, along with the pictures of Korean boys with Uzis keeping watch from a rooftop and the shots of several buildings in full flame, constitute the main iconography of the first 36 or so hours of the riot.

Seen with the eyes of television, the riot seemed to fall into three acts. The first was bloody and frightening, so full of running and shouting and the sound of breaking glass that it might almost have been a crudely overstated scene directed by one of those new young black film-makers.

The second act was quieter, and not without its deeply bitter amusements. This was the period devoted to the theater of looting—men, women, and children coming into view from behind various shapes and degrees of wreckage carrying anything they had been able to get their hands on, from cooking utensils to furniture to rolls of toilet paper and disposable diapers. Girls were seen dragging whole racks of dresses, and of course sneakers—those great emblems of ghetto status—were hanging off the arms of young and old alike.

This was also the act in which the district's representative in Congress, Maxine Waters, who had flown in from Washington, could be observed rushing around in high spirits, cameramen in tow, crying out to her constituents how much she cared for them and exhorting them to trust her in return. Representative Waters was subsequently to become the star of riot week, with innumerable talk-show appearances and much press coverage. But as one watched her skipping through the still-smoldering rubble, it was hard to banish

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the thought that probably never before had she had, and probably never again would she have, quite so good a time.

If the second act was not without its moments of involuntary comedy, the third act—clean-up time—provided a number of outright laughs. This was the moment of intervention from Hollywood. As calm at last returned and burned-out storekeepers and residents of the neighborhood tearfully began to dab at the charred ruins where their businesses and homes had once stood, there appeared on the scene a troop of movie stars bearing brooms and speaking soulfully to the cameras about "bringing us all together."

Movie stars, we know, have become a solemn lot who regularly take themselves and are taken for the heroes they play: Jack Klugman testifies to Congress as Quincy the medical examiner; Meryl Streep becomes a reborn Karen Silkwood, this time warning the authorities against the poisons of alar; and Edward James Olmos, brilliant portrayer in *Stand and Deliver* of a real-life teacher who got children in a Latino slum to master calculus, arrives in South-Central L.A. to save the children there. But viewers were never to discover just how long Mr. Olmos and his glittering companions stayed around or how much debris actually gave way before them.

As to that debris, no one knows for sure just how much of it was created or how much, in dollars or time, will be required to clear it away. Estimates of property damage vary from $750 million to $1 billion. And even numbers as gigantic as this do not and cannot by themselves tell the whole story, since they do not and cannot include any calculations of the value of the future that has now been wiped out—future efforts, future profits, future salaries. In Watts, undone by a riot more than 25 years ago, few businesses have been restored, or new ones started up, to this very day. Indeed, as a New York *Times* reporter pointed out (in another bit of inadvertent humor), the boys of Watts, deprived in so many other ways, were now also denied their fair share of the looting, because there were no businesses left in *their* neighborhood to loot.

The worst damage was suffered by the Koreans, who were deliberately singled out by the blacks for special ruin. But neither were all black-owned businesses spared, not from the torch and certainly not from the looters. One of the more vivid televised vignettes was that of a young black businessman entering his fried-chicken restaurant which had been gutted of just about everything, including even the stoves, as two teenage girls were rummaging around for some leftovers to carry off. "Hey," he called to them in shock and bewilderment, "you're not supposed to take from a brother!" They shrugged, and giggled, and walked off a little sheepishly with a couple of pans.

By Friday, May 1, the rioting and looting had spread to a variety of places in the United States, big cities, small cities, and suburbs—Atlanta (which once advertised itself as a "city too busy to hate"), Seattle, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Miami, San Francisco, New Rochelle. All these copycat riots were ostensibly set off by the acquittal of Rodney King's tormentors, and all were almost completely confined to the rioters' own neighborhoods. In Las Vegas, nighttime violence was to continue for weeks.

In Manhattan, the news that the ubiquitous black demagogue, the Reverend Al Sharpton, would be leading a protest march down Broadway triggered alarmist rumors that virtually shut the city down by 3:00 P.M. on Friday, and sent an unprecedented torrent of traffic to choke the bridges and the tunnels that are the island's only avenues of escape. Sharpton had called for a peaceful demonstration, and the police had been both plentiful and highly visible, surrounding the marchers like so many sheepherders. Thus only a small breakaway group got out of control, smashing "only" a few store windows, overturning "only" a few cars, and leaving "only" one Korean shopkeeper paralyzed for life. A bit of violence was also reported in Harlem, but again "only" one shooting and one stabbing, neither fatal.

In the days following, the city's press and officialdom were beside themselves with pride in this achievement, heaping praise on the mayor, on the police chief, and above all on the demonstrators, who had managed to come through such a difficult pass without destroying too much property or killing anyone.

If it was to take three or four days of military patrolling, as well as nights of strict curfew, to bring the violence in Los Angeles to a final halt, it took hardly more than 24 hours for the pundits and editorialists, not to mention the politicians and the professional black leaders, to commence offering their explanations of what the Los Angeles riot—and, by extension, the others—was really about.

The overwhelming thrust of the comment was simultaneously to deplore and to justify the rioting. George Bush himself more or less took this tack, but that did not prevent his (and Ronald Reagan's) alleged responsibility for the disorders from becoming a steady subtheme of the justifiers. Naturally, the presidential campaign had something to do with the bruiting of this theme: the Democratic hopeful, Jerry Brown, for instance, found the opportunity on a talk show hosted by his fellow Democrat, Jesse Jackson, to announce that ". . . ten years of building more prisons than ever before, more erosion of civil liberties, more urine testing, more police work, and at the same time exporting millions of jobs, this is what you get."

For others somewhat more focused than

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Brown, the charges against the Republicans came down roughly to two. First and most pervasive was the direct connection drawn between the condition of the black slums and the supposed withdrawal of federal funds from the cities. And second was the Bush campaign's use in 1988 of the notorious Willie Horton commercial, which had encouraged whites, as Michael Kramer of *Time* wrote, "to demonize blacks."

But aside from such exploitations of this wonderful opportunity to gain a little fortuitous partisan advantage, there was an instantaneous and wide consensus about the deeper causes of the riot. These were almost universally identified under the quick and handy rubric of "rage and frustration"—the latter, for those inclined to psychological theory, inevitably creating a breeding-ground for the former. "Rage and frustration"—the words were on the lips of everyone from the lowliest local reporter and newscaster to the most esteemed academic and social and political commentator.

Blacks across the spectrum, from Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson to the columnists Carl Rowan and William Raspberry to the *Today*-show host Bryant Gumbel, harped continuously on the idea that the people, particularly the young men, of the ghetto had been neglected for too long. According to Rowan, the big cities have been given short shrift under Reagan and Bush because the people who live there, especially blacks, vote Democratic. According to Raspberry, ghetto blacks are "people who don't register on society's screen except when they are hurting someone else, or threatening to." And according to Gumbel, "Maybe [the riot] might help in putting race relations on the front burner, after they've been subjugated [*sic*] for so long as a result of the Reagan years."

If Gumbel was, characteristically, a touch muddled, most of the black contributors to a special report, "America on Trial," published in *Newsweek* (May 11), were quite clear about the role of racism in this neglect. As Norman Amaker, professor of law at Loyola University, bluntly put what many others obviously felt: "African-Americans will draw from this the lesson we've always known. Our lives aren't worth shit."

Interestingly enough, however, when it came to justifying the violence in Los Angeles as a response to racist oppression, whites, and especially certain white journalists, were even more outspoken than their black counterparts. In a column in *Newsday*, for example, the much-lionized Sydney Schanberg asked:

> Why do so many white Americans hail protests against human-rights abuses in distant countries and fail to understand the grievances of their own black neighbors?

In a similar vein, David Broder of the Washington *Post* cautioned both George Bush and his Democratic challenger Bill Clinton that

> There is no more important test of character for an American President than what he does to heal the scars that slavery and racism have left on this society. That is the curse that is killing us, and everything else is secondary.

And on the same day, in another column in the Washington *Post*, Hobart Rowan seconded Broder's analysis:

> America is really two nations, divided along rigid class lines—the privileged who have jobs and the underclass who are denied hope because they were born with skin of the wrong color. This ugliness has been festering for a long time: too many of us turned our faces away from the obvious and refused to look at the reality of racism.

So, too, Anna Quindlen, winner of the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for her New York *Times* column, confessed that she had first thought of proposing that we wear ribbons of the kind worn for hostages and AIDS victims, to "repulse racism." But then she realized how naive this was:

> It's as naive as thinking that because African-Americans go to Harvard and sit in the next booth at Burger King, it cancels out the neon sign that blinks "Nigger" in white minds.

In an effort, presumably, to force us to confront the reality from which we have "turned our faces away," the ever-enterprising Ted Koppel of *Nightline* provided a group of young black gang members from Los Angeles with a rich opportunity to make themselves heard and understood in millions of American homes.

Now, as has been so colorfully depicted in several movies and innumerable television dramas, the minority neighborhoods of Los Angeles are riven with violent youth gangs. Their tables of organization, so to speak, as well as their relation to one another, are highly complex. There seem to be two overarching gangs, called the Bloods and the Crips, broken down into subdivisions, and subdivisions of those. Basically what these gangs do is hang out and kill one another's members, in some longstanding round of retribution and counterretribution whose mythic origin lies back in the mists of history. (One of the reasons the authorities had difficulty at first in calculating the number of deaths attributable to the riot is that a certain number are considered "normal" each week as the wages of gang warfare.)

The gang, or subgang, invited to appear on *Nightline* was the one involved in sparking the riot, the 8-Trey Gangster Crips. When Koppel asked the boys about the white truck driver who had in full view of the nation been pulled from his truck and beaten, one of them replied, "He knew better. He saw what was happening." Said a second, "It was a CIA." A third pointed out, "They saying that, well, we burning down our own community. I mean, we don't own none of these liquor stores."

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Yet another, named Time Bomb, was surprised that Koppel had never heard of him, "because of my background and my crime." At Koppel's urging, Time Bomb began to expand on that background—his years in prison for shooting, breaking and entering, and attempted murder. The member known as Li'l Monster complained that the spotlight was always on them for drive-by shootings or the killing of an innocent victim, "but what about that fly-by the United States just did on Iraq?" The conversation continued in this vein, with Li'l Monster explaining that his father had to be a criminal because he couldn't feed his family, and now he, Li'l Monster, must be a criminal, and he would in turn hand on his father's legacy to his son.

Many people were offended by this program, with its suggestion that these young thugs had a genuine case to argue. Yet there was something truly interesting to be learned from Time Bomb and Li'l Monster and the others. And that was how very much they have managed to pick up from the high-toned academic and political generalizations that have for so long served as an excuse for them and their lives. They could speak coolly in one breath of breaking and entering and killing, and in the next of their rage and frustration at the lack of jobs in their community. Or they could explain how, unlike their predecessors in 1965, they had assault rifles, Uzis, hand grenades, bulletproof vests—"not a generation of asskicker takers but . . . giving out asskickers now"—and in the same moment justify themselves by referring to the CIA and the Gulf War.

Thus does liberal ideology make its way to the streetcorners of South-Central Los Angeles.

IF, THEN, the solemn attention which has been paid to the rioters is any measure, they too can claim, as the Watts rioters did to Bayard Rustin in 1965, that they have "won." By the same measure, the great losers in 1992 are the Koreans, about whom very little has been said.

Ted Koppel did bring up the Koreans in his conversation with the gang members, and so did Tom Morganthau of *Newsweek*. With a few notable exceptions, however, the Koreans served mainly to introduce into the discussion mournful considerations of just how, in Morganthau's words, "infinitely sensitive, infinitely complicated" is the relation of race and ethnicity to poverty.

But very far from complicated is the hatred of the Koreans on the part of many blacks in South-Central L.A. It is the hatred felt for the enterprising immigrants in their midst by individuals living month to month on government checks, unable to do for themselves or by themselves. To account for these immigrant shopkeepers and small businessmen, a paranoid fantasy has been invented, that the government and/or the banks offer the Koreans special favors—an explanation the fantasists must know in their heart of hearts not to be true. (On the other hand, the complaint that the Koreans look down upon their black customers *is* very likely true.)

But the point is that among all the predictable cries that something must be done either for or about the black underclass—from Head Start to drug rehabilitation to reconstituting the Civilian Conservation Corps to a tough new clamping-down on crime—one would be hard put to find a suggestion that anyone should pass the hat for the burned-out citizens of Koreatown.

This refusal of empathy with the Los Angeles Koreans on the part of America's liberal publicists has very deep roots—as does the strange denial involved in the liberal culture's entire response to the riot. Denial, to be sure, might seem a curious choice of word for such a deal of coverage and scrutiny and such a throaty exploration of meaning. And yet for all the wrapping-up and summing-up to which the world has been treated, the very heart of the matter, staring everyone in the face, has been evaded and obscured.

LEAVING aside the hope of taking some partisan political advantage of a crisis—all too easy to understand but under the circumstances despicable—how can so many people with the utmost sincerity have said the things they said about this riot?

How is it possible that anyone, black or white, in speaking of the black underclass should in this day and age use the word "neglect"? After all, there has not been a month or a week or a day since Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote his 1965 report on the disintegration of the black family in which diagnoses of the problems of the urban black community and prescriptions for healing them have not filled the American air. That most of these prescriptions have themselves in turn created iatrogenic diseases is irrelevant here: whatever the failures that have followed upon it, attention has certainly been paid—and paid and paid and paid again.

How is it possible that anyone in good conscience should claim that too little money has been spent in, or on, the cities, when more than a trillion dollars has in one way or another been allocated to them by Washington since the 60's? How is it possible to go on declaring that what will save the young men of South-Central L.A., and the young girls they impregnate, and the illegitimate babies they sire, is jobs? How is it possible for anyone to look at these boys of the underclass—to look at them literally, with one's own eyes, and actually *see* them—and imagine that they either want or could hold on to jobs? How is it possible to think that Time Bomb and Li'l Monster, and their counterparts in Chicago, Detroit, New York, are angry and frustrated at the unemployment rate in their communities?

In short, how is it possible to persist in refusing to recognize that the condition of those young

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men is beyond the reach of government—that, indeed, the efforts of government have done much to undermine their capacity to take charge of their own lives? Yet taking charge of their own lives is the *only* thing that will save them. As Glenn Loury, the black political scientist, recently remarked, "The problem of the black underclass is a problem that will only be solved one by one and from the inside out."

This is not so very difficult an idea to grasp and it has become an ever more difficult one to deny. It is equally difficult to continue denying that to hold blacks responsible for themselves would be a mark of respect that has heretofore, despite all passionate protestations, been withheld from them in liberal thought.

DIFFICULT—but not, it would appear, impossible. For not even a quarter of a century of failure has been enough to dislodge the belief that society at large must furnish the means—the magic program or school curriculum or legal reform—to make everything all right for the black underclass. And the reason this belief cannot be shaken when it comes to blacks is that giving it up for them would force the liberal culture to give it up for everyone else as well.

Assuming responsibility for one's life, for one's everyday choices as well as for one's moral conduct, is a practice that has been eroding in American life for a long, long time: every private weakness is by now regarded as a legacy of parental misbehavior, every discomfort as an injustice, every wrong turn as an enforced imposition from outside, every defeat as a malfunction of "the system." From something as fatal as AIDS to something as nebulous as acquaintance rape, the slightest suggestion that the consequence might be connected with one's own behavior has become anathema.

This is what accounts for the absurd hue and cry over Vice President Dan Quayle's disapproving remark about the decision of a TV-sitcom heroine to have a child out of wedlock. Full-page headlines were devoted to this attack on Murphy Brown by the Vice President; talk-show guests shouted at one another about it. People attempted to charge Quayle with triviality, but their very passion in doing so belied their intention. Quayle was suggesting that both the producers and the more privileged consumers of American popular culture have a house of their own to put in order. But this stuffy message, which is to say, this truth, is what the main managers of our public discourse can least bear to hear—never mind the cost to those poor blacks whose interests they have for so long and with such self-exculpating gratification appointed themselves to serve.

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The Legacy of the 60's

Charles Murray

"Is President Bush hinting that the Peace Corps destroyed the moral fiber of poor people?" asked Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, responding to the claim by the White House spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, that the failed social programs of the 1960's were responsible for the Los Angeles riot. For Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Attorney General William Barr's assertion that the Great Society caused the breakdown of family structure was "one of the most depraved statements I have ever heard from an American official." Even Republican campaign strategists were having none of the administration line, the New York *Times* reported. "Next," one of them was quoted as saying, "Marlin [Fitzwater] will blame the savings-and-loan crisis on Woodrow Wilson."

Speaking of blame, I must take a share of it for the ridicule heaped on the administration, for in 1984 I published a book called *Losing Ground* which concluded that the reforms of social policy in the 60's directly made things worse for the American poor. And, ineptly as the administration went about pressing its point, I agree with Fitzwater's more ambitious thesis. The conditions in South-Central Los Angeles in 1992 that produced the riot *are* importantly a product of those reforms of a quarter-century ago.

I

Let me begin by briefly restating the core argument, because it has been roughly handled. Albert Shanker is right that the Peace Corps did not destroy the moral fiber of poor people; nor, for that matter, did the Voting Rights Act of 1965 or Lady Bird Johnson's highway-beautification project. The fault does not lie in every single thing that Lyndon Johnson did, nor does it even lie primarily in "social programs." In fact, if the discussion is limited to the elderly, the picture after the 60's is positive.

The point, rather, is that, beginning in the early 60's, drastically intensifying during the Johnson administration, but also persisting through the Nixon administration, American social policy toward poor and disadvantaged youths underwent a transformation in three large domains: welfare, education, and criminal justice. These domains were transformed because the assumptions behind social policy were transformed among the elites who define the received wisdom in any given era.

The new wisdom had many elements, but the most fundamental and pervasive was the shift away from a belief in America as the Land of Opportunity, with the best and fairest system in the world, benign and self-correcting, toward an assumption that the American system is deeply flawed and is responsible for the plight of the disadvantaged. Poverty, it was concluded, is caused by structural features of capitalism. If a student misbehaves in school or a young man snatches a purse or a young woman has a baby without a husband, these are expressions of or responses to social conditions beyond their control. Value judgments themselves are inappropriate. Having a baby without a husband is a choice, not a sin or even necessarily a mistake. It is society that must change, not individuals; the rich must see the errors of their ways, not the poor the errors of theirs. To hold people accountable for their behavior is unjust—blaming the victim. Root causes must be corrected.

These views permeated every reform that affected poor people, and especially poor black young people, and there were hundreds of such reforms. They consisted not only of new laws and offices and bureaus and programs, but also of dozens of landmark court decisions, sweeping executive actions, and obscure changes in regulatory and administrative practice that sometimes had wide repercussions.

Boiled down to their simplest terms, the effects of these reforms were as follows. In 1960, it was extremely punishing, financially and socially, to have a baby without a husband. The reforms made that behavior less punishing on both counts. In 1960, the odds of being caught and going to jail if you committed several crimes were high. The reforms lowered the odds both of getting caught and of going to jail. In 1960, public education meant being obliged to comply with a variety of

Charles Murray is the Bradley Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C. His most recent book is *In Pursuit.*

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expectations, ranging from actually attending every class, every day, to actually passing examinations. The reforms gutted those requirements.

But the effects of the reforms transcended mechanical changes in odds and probabilities in a few discrete areas. These effects interacted. A young man's posture toward low-paying jobs is affected when the pressure on him to support his child eases; his interest in studying hard is affected by the increasing attractions of the hustles he sees on the street. A young woman, watching a boyfriend who cannot hold a job, is less likely to demand that he marry her and more likely to go on welfare. That she can now live with a boyfriend without losing her welfare payments alters a wide range of considerations for both of them.

Such interactions in turn form numerous feedback loops and, among other things, tear apart the web of status rewards and penalties that govern behavior in any community. That a high school does not contain just one girl who is pregnant but many erodes the stigma associated with being single and pregnant, and can even turn it into the fashionable thing to do. Holding a low-paying job is something that is admired in a community that depends on precisely such behavior to survive; as the community stops having to depend on that behavior, the praise turns to scorn for working for chump change. Trying hard in school becomes a derisively white thing to do when everyone is supposed to be a victim and oppression is a convenient excuse for failure.

I am not talking of stick-figure caricatures who use calculators to determine the purchasing power of a welfare check, but adolescents trying to make sense of the world around them, responding to short-term pushes and pulls as do adolescents everywhere, and in the process setting in motion complex forces with resonating, mutually reinforcing consequences. The reform period of the 60's fundamentally changed what makes sense to poor black adolescents in the short term.

During this period, a variety of trend-lines for measuring the status of working-age blacks began to take a turn for the worse. Illegitimacy among blacks had been rising slowly; in the mid-60's, the slope of the trend-line suddenly steepened. Homicide among blacks had declined during the 50's. In the mid-60's, it shot up, along with black arrest rates for violent crime. Black marriage rates and male labor-force participation both plummeted, after a history of remaining near or above white norms.

Those without access to the statistics could see for themselves that life was deteriorating; they could see it around them in the abandoned buildings, the youths hanging out on the streets, and the destruction of the well-ordered black working-class neighborhoods that had once dotted inner cities.

That many trend-lines of social functioning took a turn for the worse during the 60's is not subject to much dispute. The main source of argument has been about causes. After all, many other things were going on during the 60's besides changes in government policy. Could not these other factors be to blame? And did not the other trends—the reduction in poverty, for example—tell a brighter story?

The argument has been long and complicated, for the excellent reason that the topic is authentically complex. Trying to tease out the causes of rising illegitimacy and crime is tough; so is trying to decide why the poverty rate went down throughout the 60's and stopped going down during the 70's. But in the aftermath of the L.A. riot, this debate is beside the point. If the reforms of the 60's were never to blame for the rise of the underclass in the 70's, then they surely are not to blame for its entrenchment in the 80's. But if they were to blame, then the question becomes: are they still?

The post-L.A. received wisdom seems to have three components. First, since the Republicans have been in power for twelve years, current social policy is their social policy. Second, the plight of black America got worse in the 80's. Third, we know by this time that some programs worked, with Head Start and Job Corps heading the list, so it is time to hitch up our pants and start doing the things that we know how to do.

All three of these contentions are wrong—with qualifications, of course, but still wrong.

II

For most of affluent America, the social policies of the 60's are over and done with. Most of these people have long since sent their children to private schools or moved to suburbs where the public schools are run as the parents wish. Most live in communities where the cops roust suspicious people, the Supreme Court be damned, and crime is low; or they live in urban enclaves where (within the enclave) crime is low. As for the rules about welfare and food stamps and social services, these never affected the affluent.

Within the inner city, however, especially among the poor, and most especially among the black poor, the 60's remain in full flower. An adolescent on the streets of an inner city as of 1992 lives in a governmental and policy environment only marginally different from the one that had evolved by the early 70's.

The schools work much as they did then. The reforms of the 60's saw an elaborate social agenda laid on the schools, the imposition of restrictions on how schools could deal with problem students (and, indirectly, how effectively they could edu-

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cate gifted students), and layers of bureaucracy and books of rules that went along with vastly expanded federal assistance.

Suburban schools jettisoned much of this nonsense in the 80's. But the reforms of the 60's dovetailed nicely with the propensity of big-city school bureaucracies to become ever more immobile, for the teachers' unions to hedge their responsibilities ever more restrictively, and for big-city pressure groups to use the schools as a political football. A few cities such as Chicago are making desperate attempts to break out of this bind, but with little success. Whatever was wrong with the training and the social signals being given by the educational system to an inner-city adolescent in the early 70's is still wrong today, and the reforms of the 60's still bear important responsibility for that.

Welfare remains more generous than it was during the heyday of the 60's reforms. I know this conflicts with the endlessly repeated claim that the purchasing power of welfare benefits has fallen so much that we are back to the levels of the 50's. But this argument is always expressed in terms of the purchasing power of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits. If instead one includes all the major elements in the welfare package—adding in food stamps, Medicaid, and housing subsidies—then benefits increased rapidly during the decade from 1965 to 1974, retreated modestly in real value throughout the rest of the 70's, and rose during the 80's.

Being more precise involves getting into the question of how Medicaid and housing benefits are to be valued. But throughout the range of the accepted methods, it remains true that the value of the welfare package in 1992 is higher than it was when Ronald Reagan took office, and that it is at the level of the early 70's, just below the peak. Furthermore, these statements are based on calculations that do not include Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, school-lunch programs, and the many special funds and services for welfare recipients that are part of the package in most major cities.

In short, the assertion that the situation facing a potential welfare mother in 1992 is significantly different from the situation that has faced her ever since the end of the 60's reforms is simply wrong. The key point about welfare is this: in 1960, it was so meager that only a small set of young women at the very bottom layer of society could think it was "enough" to enable a women to keep a baby without a husband. By 1970, it was "enough," both in the resources it provided and in the easier terms under which it could be obtained, to enable a broad stratum of low-income women to keep a baby without a husband. That remains true today.

The changes during the Reagan years consisted of the amendments to the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) in 1981, which tightened the eligibility rules for receiving AFDC payments, and the welfare reform bill of 1988. The OBRA amendments represented a significant change, moving away from the assumptions of the 60's, and it produced a reduction in the welfare rolls. Had there been another half-dozen reforms with the same weight and vector, the Reagan administration could properly claim to have had its own welfare policy. But the OBRA amendments were an isolated exception, and their effects were limited to potential recipients who possessed substantial independent income—not the heart of the welfare problem.

The only other significant change in the welfare system, in 1988, went in the opposite direction. The rhetoric was new, reflecting the principle that society expects welfare recipients to work. But the work and training aspects of the bill were deferred and indefinite. The immediate effect was to expand benefits by granting AFDC women a year of Medicaid coverage and child-care benefits after leaving the rolls. As in the reforms of the 60's, the intent was to give women on welfare an incentive to get jobs, but, again as in the reforms of the 60's, the legislation ignored the effects on women who were not on welfare.

Since 1988, the AFDC rolls have broken out of the narrow range within which they had been moving for a decade and have been climbing steadily. Some blame it on the recession, even though welfare rolls have not previously tracked with unemployment. It seems more likely that we are observing the replay of an old phenomenon: whenever Congress has legislated a new incentive for women to leave welfare, the unintended downward pull into the welfare system has outweighed the intended upward push out.

With regard to crime, the situation in the 90's compared to the 60's is mixed. The 60's gave the nation a fundamentally new stance toward law enforcement and punishment. The number of prisoners dropped during the 60's—not just prisoners in proportion to arrests, but the raw number. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court was handing down the decisions—*Miranda*, *Mapp*, and the rest of the usual suspects—that are notorious for restricting the police. The administration of justice during the 60's became more haphazard, with wider use of plea bargains, longer delays between arrest and trial, trial and sentencing, sentencing and execution of judgment, along with other changes that reduced the swiftness and certainty of punishment for crime. It also happened that crime increased by an astonishing amount during the 60's.

What is different today? Yes, everyone now favors law and order, including the Supreme Court. But the major decisions of the 60's have been narrowed only at the margins, not reversed. The rules of the game remain essentially the same as they were at the end of the reform period. If you get picked up today for a felony in a big city,

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chances are you will be back on the street tomorrow, even if you have a prior record. If your case is pursued at all (many are not), chances are you will be able to plea-bargain it down to a much lesser charge. Unless you have a long prior record, chances are you will do no jail time. All of these procedures will probably take months to transpire.

In one respect, policy has unquestionably changed. The prison population more than doubled during the 80's, indicating that the risks of going to prison if caught were raised. To that extent, those who say that the Republicans established their own policy and are accountable for it have a point. There are, however, three bottom lines in the crime game. The first is your chance of being punished if you get caught, and that has indeed gone up. But the second is the chance of getting caught at all, and that has either remained steady since the end of the reform period or dropped. The third is opportunities to make money from crime, and this has remained at least constant and, in the drug trade, expanded.

It is unclear how these conflicting trends might balance out in the eyes of an adolescent standing on a streetcorner contemplating whether to get involved in a hustle. It is certainly a mistake to think that the law-and-order years of the Republicans have made a major difference in that adolescent's perception of how the criminal-justice system works. The system of 1992 is still essentially the system that was shaped by the reform period.

None of this discussion is intended to imply that we could return to the pre-reform levels of crime or illegitimacy if we repealed a few laws and reversed a few Supreme Court decisions. On the contrary, the social dynamics of the inner city have taken on a life of their own, and I think it is unlikely that anything short of radical changes will produce much of an effect on the behaviors associated with the underclass. But if the question is how the social policy of the 60's can be responsible for the problems of the 90's, the answer is straightforward: the reform period set those dynamics in motion and, with minor exceptions, the policies it produced are still in effect.

III

THE next question is whether the 80's saw blacks lose ground, thereby producing the "rage and frustration" that are said to have caused the Los Angeles riot. Unquestionably, some things did get worse, principally antagonism between the races. But racial hostility is one thing; the facts regarding black progress and regression during the 80's are another. (All the data that follow may be found in the basic statistical compendia of the Bureau of the Census, the National Center for Health Statistics, and the Departments of Labor and Education.)

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Median Family Income

	1960	1970	1980	1990
BLACK (1990 $)	14,262	21,151	20,103	21,423
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	-11,502	-13,329	-14,639	-15,492

After all the talk of shredded safety nets and the rich-getting-richer during the greedy Reagan years is done, it remains true that real black family income fell by about $1,000 during the 70's and rose by about $1,300 during the 80's. There are less rosy sides to this picture, however. For example, the median income of black full-time, year-round workers rose for women during the 80's but continued to fall for men, as it has since the mid-70's. But overall, the 80's were better for blacks economically than the 70's. The 80's were even better regarding income disparity: the dollar gap with whites grew during the 80's, but the 70's were even worse.

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Official Poverty Rate

	1959	1970	1980	1990
BLACK PERCENTAGE	55.1	33.5	32.5	31.9
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	37.0	23.6	22.3	21.2

But what about the poor? No, the percentage of black poor did not increase under Reagan; it fell, and by more is than indicated in these numbers—from 34.2 percent in the year he came to office to 30.7 percent in the year he left. It should be added that the official poverty measure is pitted with all sorts of problems, especially its failure to take noncash income and unreported income into account. These two factors would make both the 70's and 80's look better in comparison with changes in the 60's. In any case, comparing decades: after a plunging poverty rate in the 60's, the 70's saw a small decrease in black poverty and a small decrease in the gap with whites; this experience was continued in the 80's. The differences between the two decades are fractions of a percentage point.

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Percentage of employed blacks working in white-collar occupations

	1960	1970	1980	1990
BLACK PERCENTAGE	16.1	27.9	39.2	43.6
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	-30.5	-22.9	-14.7	-14.5

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This figure has been going up since the 50's. The proportion of blacks working in white-collar jobs grew by much more in the 70's than in the 80's. The gap with whites also closed substantially during the 70's, then held steady during the 80's. The 70's were clearly better for blacks on this measure.

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Enrollment in school for children ages 14-17

	1960	1970	1980	1990
BLACK PERCENTAGE	86.8	91.9	94.2	95.4
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	-4.0	-2.6	1.0	-0.8

Turning to education, we first look at enrollment in secondary school. Enrollment in high school is a nearly unique example of an indicator in which black children have achieved parity with white children. Black enrollment increased in both the 70's and 80's, but somewhat more in the 70's. In addition, the proportion of high-school dropouts dropped even more during the 70's than during the 80's. The 70's were better for blacks.

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Enrollment in school for young adults ages 20-24

	1960	1970	1980	1990
BLACK PERCENTAGE	7.5	14.2	17.7	23.7
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	-6.4	-8.3	-5.0	-6.2

This indicator primarily captures attendance at college and graduate school, and the results seem to contradict headlines which have told of declining college enrollment by blacks. There have indeed been problem areas, especially involving black dropout rates and enrollment in graduate schools, but overall the 80's were a good decade for blacks going to college. For example, the percentage of black high-school graduates who went to college the following fall rose substantially, from 41.9 percent to 52.8 percent during the 80's (comparable data for 1960 and 1970 are not available). The 80's were a bit better for blacks.

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Male Victimization by Homicide

	1960	1970	1980	1988
BLACK RATE PER 100,000	34.5	67.6	66.6	58.0
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	30.9	60.8	55.7	50.1

Crime is an area where it is difficult to know what to make of the data. One of the most solid crime statistics is the number of homicides, and it shows that homicide victimization among blacks dropped in the 80's and the gap with whites closed modestly. Victimization rates for crimes also show reductions across all types of crime, consistent with this result. On the other hand, arrests of blacks rose during the 80's after remaining flat during the 70's, and the public perception that crime has gotten worse seems universal. Let us consider the crime question a puzzle yet to be resolved, leaving open the possibility that more progress was made in the 80's than is generally thought.

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Infant Mortality (deaths per 1,000 live births)

	1960	1970	1980	1989
BLACK PERCENTAGE	44.3	32.6	21.4	17.1
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	21.4	14.8	10.4	8.9

Turning now to health, the first indicator is the widely-cited infant-mortality rate. The black differential with whites continues to be very great, as it has been since statistics have been kept. Blacks achieved large reductions in infant mortality in both the 60's and 70's, with slower gains in the 80's. The gap also continued to narrow, but more slowly than in previous decades. In other words, the story is one of continued progress, not backsliding, but the 70's were definitely better for blacks.

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Life Expectancy

	1960	1970	1980	1989
BLACK, IN YEARS	63.6	64.1	68.1	69.7
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	-7.0	-7.6	-6.3	-6.2

Black life expectancy has grown during each of the last three decades. The black-white gap, which widened during the 60's, narrowed in the 70's and held steady in the 80's. Life expectancy has been flat for blacks since 1984 for both males and females, however, and actually fell during a few of those years. The 70's were much better for blacks on this one.

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Illegitimacy Ratio (births to single women as a proportion of live births)

	1960	1970	1980	1989
BLACK PERCENTAGE	21.6	37.6	55.2	65.7
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	19.3	31.9	44.2	46.5

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We now come to the underlying problem that drives so many of the other problems among the underclass, children growing up without fathers and women trying to get along without a husband. Beginning with the illegitimacy ratio, the proportion of babies born to single women rose much more in the 70's than in the 80's, and so did the size of the gap. On the other hand, things continued to get considerably worse during the 80's. The 80's were better for blacks, but only by comparison.

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Illegitimate babies produced annually per 1,000 women ages 15-44

	1960	1970	1980	1989
BABIES PER 1,000 BLACK WOMEN	33.1	43.4	48.7	56.4
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	30.5	38.6	41.6	43.7

It is not just the illegitimacy ratio that has been increasing, but the production of illegitimate babies as well, most markedly during the last half of the 60's. The 80's saw continued increases, along with a gap that continued to widen, though slightly less than during the 70's. There is not much to choose between the two decades. The only bright spot, if it may be called that, is that the proportion of families headed by a single female grew slowly during the 80's, by only two percentage points, compared to the steep rise from 21.8 to 29.1 percent of black families during the 70's.

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Unemployment among young black males ages 16-24

	1960	1970	1980	1990
BLACK PERCENTAGE	17.3	17.4	28.4	24.2
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	6.7	7.2	15.4	14.3

The problems of the underclass are also rooted in the behavior of young males regarding the labor force. Unemployment rates fluctuate from year to year. The secular trend was rising unemployment for black male youths throughout the 70's and into the early 80's, hitting a high of 36.9 percent in 1982. The net drop since then has been large, even after the rise during the current recession. The 80's were unquestionably better for blacks in this regard. But we are left with a situation in which, even during the best years of the 80's, black youth unemployment remained well above the levels of the 60's.

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Labor force participation (LFP) among young black males ages 16-24

	1960	1970	1980	1990
BLACK PERCENTAGE	74.1	64.5	62.0	59.1
BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCE	+2.8	-5.7	-14.7	-15.3

LFP is a more stable indicator than unemployment and a good indicator of basic stance toward the labor force. The absolute rate fell by roughly the same amounts in both decades (fractionally less during the 80's). The gap between blacks and whites widened dramatically during the 70's, continuing a trend that had begun in the mid-60's, then remained nearly steady in the 80's. The 80's were again better for blacks, relatively speaking. But the troubling reality is that a large proportion of young black males of prime working age are not even available for work. Nor is this picture less troubling when educational enrollment is taken into account. Among black males ages 16-24 with no more than a high-school education, who are *not* in school, roughly 30 percent are not in the labor force.

WHAT is one to make of this heterogeneous set of indicators and results? Partisans of both sides will seize upon the indicators that suit them, but the pattern is probably susceptible to a few generalizations. One is that black status improved in both the 70's and 80's on things that primarily reflect external conditions or behaviors by the black middle class. Infant mortality drops as medical technology improves; black enrollment in college expands with financial help and affirmative action; white-collar employment grows among blacks who have taken advantage of educational opportunities.

The second general comment is that the deterioration in black status is concentrated in the mainsprings of the underclass: dropout from the labor force among young males and births to single young women, both of which continued to grow in the 80's, though more slowly than in the 70's. As long as these behaviors continue, the plight of the black inner city will deepen.

The final general comment is that the 80's come out of the comparison much better than the day-to-day media accounts would lead one to expect. People who want to indict the 80's as a decade of neglect must find other data. I am unaware of any major surprises that lurk in such other measures, but perhaps they exist. If anyone finds them, I suggest only that the presenter follow the procedure used here: show the figures for 1960 and 1970 along with those for 1980 and 1990, and focus on indicators that represent how

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people's lives have changed, not how government spending has changed.

IV

So far as government spending goes, there is now almost a mantra: "We know Head Start works. We know Job Corps works." Other programs sometimes make the list, but these are the stars. Commentary on the problems of the black inner city also has recently begun to assume that certain solutions will work, if only we do the obvious thing and try them.

Thus one often reads op-ed columns in which it is assumed that of course black teenage girls would have fewer babies if only they had access to better sex education, or that of course the unemployment rate among teenage black males would go down if only jobs were made available. This self-assurance is invincibly ignorant of history. The effects of such programs have been assessed, we have a rich and reasonably consistent body of results, and those results are not encouraging.

Head Start is a striking example. Let me begin by saying that I think a good preschool is generally a good thing for the same reason that kindergarten is a good thing, and I am in favor of providing good preschools for disadvantaged children. Head Start, however, is not being discussed just as a nice thing to do for children, but as an example of how we can make progress in the inner city.

The reality is that no program of the 60's has been more often evaluated, more thoroughly, than Head Start—a synthesis published in 1983 annotated 1,500 studies.[1] This work has produced a few broad conclusions. One is that Head Start programs, properly implemented, can enhance some aspects of social development and school performance. But these effects are spotty, and when they occur they fade, disappearing altogether after about three years. All in all, Head Start is not exactly a failure (it is still a nice thing to do for kids), but neither is there any reason to believe that anything will change in the inner city if only Congress fully funds Head Start.

But surely we know that Head Start reduces delinquency and unemployment and pregnancies in later life? No. We have a handful of experimental programs that have made such claims with varying degrees of evidence to back them up, but none of them bears much resemblance to Head Start.

By far the best known of these is the Perry Preschool Program from Ypsilanti, Michigan, which had 58 youngsters and a control group of 65. (Let us pause for a moment and consider what would happen to someone who tried to claim that an intervention strategy did *not* work on the basis of one program with 58 youngsters.) Perry Preschool had four teachers each year, and in any one year these four teachers together were dealing with no more than a total of 24 children—a 1:6 ratio. The teachers were hand-picked, highly trained and motivated. They received further extensive training in the special curriculum adopted for the program. In addition to the daily preschool time, the program included an hour-and-a-half home visit to each mother each week.

The first salient point is thus that Perry Preschool was a handcrafted little jewel that the federal government cannot conceivably replicate nationwide—not because there is not enough money (though that is part of it), but because of the nature of large programs. Bureaucracies give you Head Starts, not Perry Preschools.

The other salient point has to do with outcomes. Perry Preschool is the chief source of the claim that preschool intervention can reduce high-school dropout, unemployment, delinquency, and pregnancies. Yet when the program's 58 children were assessed at age nineteen, 33 percent had dropped out of high school, 41 percent were unemployed, 31 percent had been arrested, and the 25 girls had experienced 17 pregnancies.[2] All of these numbers were evidence of success because the rates for the control group were even worse, but it is not the sort of success that the advocates of Head Start can afford to describe explicitly.

Like Head Start, the Job Corps has been evaluated many times over the years. When the results have been aggregated over all centers, they have usually shown modest gains in average earnings—a matter of a few hundred dollars per year.[3] When evaluators examine individual centers, anecdotal evidence indicates that some are more effective than others. The best ones have a demanding work load, strict rules of behavior, and strict enforcement (which means that many of the entrants never finish the course).

In other words, the Job Corps works for young people who are able to get up every morning, stick with a task, accept a subordinate relationship, and work hard. These people also tend to do well without the Job Corps. Not even the best of the Job Corps centers has a good track record with young people who cannot make themselves get up every morning, who get discouraged easily, get mad when someone tells them what to do, and take a nap when no one is watching. But the latter are among the characteristics of the chronically unemployed.

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[1] *A Review of Head Start Since 1970*, by R. Hubbell, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1983).

[2] *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 19*, by John R. Berrueta-Clement *et al.*, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, pp. 2, 69.

[3] "The Short-Term Economic Impact of the Job Corps Program," by Charles Mallar *et al.*, in *Evaluation Studies Review Annual*, Ernst Stromsdorfer and G. Farkas, eds., Sage Publications (1980), pp. 332-59.

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We have a great deal of experience with job programs that try to deal with the chronically unemployed and the inner-city youth who has never held a job. After twelve years in which social programs have been unpopular, it is easy to forget how massive those job programs were. At their height in the late 70's, the programs under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) had nearly four million first-time entrants in a single year and an annual budget equivalent to $19 billion in 1990 dollars. The evaluations of CETA came in, and the consensus conclusion was that it had some positive impact on women, but not on men.[4] This is consistent with findings from other, small-scale demonstration projects such as those conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation and early results from the evaluation of the Job Training Partnership Act.

Unfortunately, the failure to affect males is decisive, for a core problem in the inner city is that males are not assuming their role in the community as husbands, fathers, and providers. If job programs are to be the answer for the 90's, what is it that we propose to do differently this time around?

More generally, attempts to solve the problems of the inner city have a consistent record. The failures vastly outnumber the successes. The claimed successes tend to evaporate when an independent evaluator assesses them. The handful of successes that survive scrutiny are local, small-scale, initiated and run by dedicated people, and operated idiosyncratically and pragmatically—all the things that large-scale federal programs inherently cannot be. Nor, as the government has found after many attempts, can the successes be franchised like a McDonald's, for the idiosyncratic capabilities of the founders turn out to be crucial to the success of the original.

Ever since the conclusion that "nothing works" was advanced in the 80's, the advocates of new programs have tried to show why it is an exaggeration. They have been able to do so, insofar as some problems (such as poverty among the elderly) can be cured by writing enough checks, a task at which the federal government excels. But when it comes to programs that will change the behavior of adolescents and young adults, the record of federal social programs (and most state and municipal social programs) remains dismal. The resurgence of optimism about social programs represents a mismatch between the actual nature of the underclass and the way people want it to be, and a mismatch between the actual way that large-scale programs are implemented and the way each new generation of reformers thinks it can implement them.

V

THESE observations are out of season. It is a time for lighting candles. But there is a case to be made for cursing the darkness. South-Central Los Angeles and inner cities throughout America did not need to evolve the way they have done. Until the last few decades, poor communities throughout American history had been able to function as communities, despite objective deprivation and oppression far greater than any community faces in 1992. Then, in the space of a few years, just as we were finally lifting the objective elements of deprivation and oppression, we inadvertently undercut the pilings on which communities rest.

It turns out that communities survive by socializing their young to certain norms of behavior. They achieve that socialization with the help of realities to which parents can point—you have to work, or you won't eat; if you don't have a husband, you won't be able to take care of your children; if you commit crimes, you will go to jail. From this raw material, communities fashion the gentler rewards and penalties of social life that constrain unwanted behaviors and foster desired ones. Outside the inner city, we are busily reconstructing the damage done to the social fabric during the reform period of the 60's, with considerable success. Inside the inner city, that fabric has become so tattered that it is difficult to see any external means of restoration.

I will therefore refrain from concluding with my own ten-point plan. All we can be sure of is that authentic solutions will be radical ones. There are essentially two alternatives. One is authoritarian, treating the inner city as occupied territory and its citizens as wards to be tutored and manipulated by the wise hand of the state. The other, and in my view the only choice that American democracy can live with, is to take seriously the old aphorism that the only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him. The only way that inner-city communities will again begin to function as communities is if the individuals within them are again permitted and required to engage in that most Jeffersonian of enterprises, self-governance.

[4] The best longitudinal studies, commissioned by the Department of Labor, are gathered in *Evaluation Review (11)*, No. 4, August 1987.

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Is White Racism the Problem?

Arch Puddington

A CONSPICUOUS feature of the commentary on the recent Los Angeles riot was the many comparisons between racial conflict in America and the most murderous ethnic strife abroad. More than once, Los Angeles was likened to Yugoslavia, and frequent parallels were drawn between conditions here and in South Africa, with neighborhoods like South-Central Los Angeles identified as the American version of Soweto. Ethnic and religious hatred in the Middle East was also invoked. The British *Guardian* headlined one article, "Beirut in L.A."; inevitably, black neighborhoods were portrayed as similar to the West Bank, with blacks cast as America's Palestinians, and the riots characterized as a black *intifada*.

Some black political figures, particularly Jesse Jackson and Maxine Waters (who represents South-Central L.A. in Congress), referred to the riot as a rebellion, with the implication that the rioters should be regarded as the heroes of a struggle against despotism. Yet the black mobs who beat into senselessness white motorists who had strayed into the wrong neighborhoods were not participating in a rebellion; and most of the victims of the killing, burning, and looting were members of their own race. As for those engaged in the looting, it was difficult to believe that they were telling us anything other than that human beings will often yield to temptation if there appear to be no sanctions involved.

Of course, the commentators who drew comparisons between the Los Angeles disorders and conditions in other distressed corners of the globe had in mind the political similarities as well as the physical ones. But the view of an America plagued by a racial conflict as lethal as the struggle pitting Serbs against Croats or the Hezbollah against Maronite Christians cannot long be sustained.

To begin with, whites here are not killing blacks; less than 3 percent of wrongful deaths in 1990 involved white assailants and black victims, half the percentage of cases where blacks were the assailants and whites the victims.

ARCH PUDDINGTON, a former aide to the late civil-rights leader, Bayard Rustin, writes frequently on race relations. He works for Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty in New York.

Nor are American whites unmoved by cases of racial injustice. By overwhelming majorities whites expressed bewilderment and outrage over the not-guilty verdict rendered in the case of the four white Los Angeles police officers accused of beating a black man (Rodney King), the incident which triggered the riots in L.A. and several other cities. Whites might not have been ready to label the residents of Ventura County, where the trial was held, as reactionary white suburbanites (in the words of a black California politician, Willie Brown). But there was certainly a willingness to accept the proposition that blacks are treated less fairly than whites by the criminal-justice system, even though whites are aware of the high rates of black crime.

Nor is it accurate to accuse white Americans of complacency about the plight of the black poor. Many may believe that affirmative action has elevated blacks to the status of a preferred class, but most recognize that blacks are more likely than other groups to be afflicted by poverty, inadequate medical care, and a multitude of other such problems.

A more accurate statement is that Americans have suffered from a lack of leadership on racial matters, from both the Right and the Left. The Left's shortcomings were on display in black political leaders like Representative Ron Dellums and Jesse Jackson, who responded to the riots by demanding massive transfers from the military budget to the inner city, attacking foreign aid and free-trade policies, and issuing silly declarations about the bailout of the savings-and-loan industry. There was also the spectacle of Representative Waters assuring America that she did not condone violence and looting, and then, again and again, coming perilously close to doing just that.

Conservatives, on the other hand, were left with no credible response to the repeated references by liberals to "twelve years of neglect" under Presidents Reagan and Bush. For there was no denying that both of these administrations gave every sign of obliviousness to the racial problem and in the process reinforced the impression that conservatives simply do not care much whether blacks succeed or not.

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For some commentators, finally, responsibility lay not with American leadership but with America itself. They were convinced, in other words, that America is a thoroughly racist society—that racism, and not the failure of this or that program, or the policies of this or that administration, is the source of the seemingly intractable problems of the inner-city black poor.

Charges of racism have, of course, been hurled about quite promiscuously in recent years, with the result that many Americans see it as one of those political terms which have been stripped of meaning through misuse by demagogues. Recognizing this, those who attributed the Los Angeles events to white racism usually refrained from the kind of generalized indictment of American society that was routinely voiced during the 1960's. Instead, they focused on specific institutions, such as the Los Angeles Police Department, the criminal-justice system, or the banks (for their reluctance to provide loans to inner-city businesses).

There was, however, at least one voice prepared to blame the riots on the bigotry of individual whites and the racism of American institutions: Andrew Hacker, the white political scientist whose controversial book, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, and Unequal*, was published just a few weeks before the riots.* *Two Nations* was already on the best-seller lists when the Los Angeles riot broke out, and it climbed steadily in sales thanks to the consequent revival of concern over the country's racial troubles.

The thesis of *Two Nations* is set forth in the very first paragraph. Race, Hacker tells us, "has been an American obsession since the first Europeans sighted 'savages' on these shores." While the American Indians would eventually be "subdued" or "slaughtered," the importation of African slaves would ensure a permanent racial crisis for the new society. Today, the fact that America was once a slave-owning society "remains alive in the memory of both races and continues to separate them." "Black Americans," Hacker adds, "are Americans, yet they still subsist as aliens in the only land they know." Thus America is in reality "two separate nations," where blacks "must endure a segregation that is far from freely chosen."

These phrases resonate with the apocalyptic language used in 1968 by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder in what became popularly known as the Kerner Report. In its most frequently quoted passage, the Kerner Report declared that America was becoming "two societies, one white, one black—separate and unequal," and placed the burden of responsibility for this development on "white racism."

The Kerner Report's long-term effect on social policy is debatable. Without doubt, however, the report had the unintended consequence of alienating many whites from the civil-rights agenda. These whites interpreted the more pointed Kerner formulations as blaming them for the rash of riots which had engulfed the nation's major cities, and they reacted with predictable indignation. Some black leaders also found the report unfortunate insofar as it focused attention on the psychology of individual whites rather than on the source of black economic inequality.

Yet Hacker is even more insistent than the Kerner Report was about the racism both of individual Americans and American institutions. He damns everything from the police to the schools to corporate executives to popular culture as complicit in a regime of racial subordination—a condition, he asserts, which exists because that is the way whites want it.

In addition, then, to echoing the Kerner Report, Hacker's analysis—for all the concise, matter-of-fact, dry prose in which it is couched—pulsates with the spirit of the radical 60's, when New Left and Black Power ideologues discovered systemic bias throughout American life. Hacker even betrays an attraction for the kind of theorizing which gained currency during the sourest period of racial radicalism and urban chaos. He is, for example, attracted to the young Eldridge Cleaver's ruminations about rape as an instrument of political revenge against white society, along with the late James Baldwin's proposition that whites "need the nigger"—that is, that whites have a stake in seeing blacks as inferior, in order to bolster their own illusion of racial superiority.

In general, Hacker uses racism the way Marxists use class oppression, as a ready-made explanation for all social phenomena, a sterile approach preordained to reach the gloomy, if sensationalistic, conclusion that racial progress will invariably be thwarted by a white majority living in constant dread of challenges to its supremacy.

Take Hacker's discussion of income inequality. He begins by noting that while whites have always earned considerably more than blacks on average, the income gap did narrow by a substantial amount in the three decades before 1970. The most pronounced improvement occurred in the years 1940-59—a period when Jim Crow prevailed in the South, where most blacks then lived, and when thousands of blacks were finding employment in the industrial centers of the North and Midwest. But since 1970, Hacker notes, the racial gap has narrowed hardly at all.

The trends emphasized by Hacker would seem to substantiate the conclusions of the sociologist, William Julius Wilson, that the failure of blacks to continue their march toward income parity stems

* Scribners, 258 pp., $24.95.

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primarily from their having been disproportionately hurt by the decline in industrial employment. But this theory clashes with Hacker's basic argument which traces inequality to racism and racism alone, and so he does not dwell on it. Likewise, he conveniently ignores the fact that working-class Americans of all races have suffered income stagnation during the past twenty years, another trend which challenges his book's main premise.

Nor is Hacker drawn to the idea that blacks should emulate the model of recent immigrant groups by seeking economic advancement through small businesses sustained by dawn-to-dusk hours and the mobilization of entire families. Hacker recognizes that during the period of legal segregation black-owned businesses often served black neighborhoods, but he seems to sympathize with the position now taken by many blacks that, having lived in America for generations, they should not have to make the sacrifices which newcomers are compelled to make. Hacker adds that whites themselves are less likely to engage in small business than such groups as Koreans, Japanese, and Cubans, and for this reason should refrain from passing judgment on blacks for their lack of entrepreneurial enthusiasm.

From just about every perspective, this is a thoroughly insidious argument, guaranteed to feed the flames of ghetto defeatism. Yes, there are whites who preach unappetizing sermons which counterpose the achievements of Asian immigrants to the failures of the black poor. Yet whites are still twice as likely as blacks to own their own businesses, and in any case whites are not confronted by the kind of economic crisis which now afflicts generation after generation of inner-city black poor.

Blacks, of course, do face certain hurdles to successful business ownership, and where government can assist in lowering these barriers, action should be aggressively taken. But part of the problem clearly involves the negative attitudes of young blacks not merely to business ownership but to the entire world of work.

To be sure, these attitudes are not shared by all or even most black males; we are, after all, familiar with the pictures of thousands of workers, mainly black, lining up to apply for a handful of positions at the post office or the assembly-line plant. There is, however, another image, one highlighted in an illuminating post-riot *MacNeil-Lehrer* segment, in which a group of young male Harlemites had no hesitation in telling an interviewer of their unwillingness to accept jobs advertised at a local placement office because the pay was too low.

Here, we were informed, was a graphic example of the dilemma confronting young black men whose employment opportunities were limited to "dead-end jobs." Yet it was not pointed out—it seldom is—that historically people without much education have very often started out at precisely such dead-end jobs, acquired a respectable work record, and then moved on to better-paying positions in other fields.

Even today, according to a recent study, 90 percent of those applying for new taxi-driver licenses in New York are foreign-born; and only a portion of the 10 percent who are native-born is black. Now, driving a taxi may not be the most lucrative job in the world, but it is not the kind of minimum-wage position which black men often deride; in many ways, it is an ideal transitional job for young men without a clear sense of what they want to do with their lives. Racial discrimination is not a problem, and hiring standards are far from stringent. Here, one would think, is an occupation ready-made for heavy black participation. That this is not the case inevitably raises questions about black male attitudes toward the world of work that Hacker, for one, does not even begin to deal with.

Yet this issue must be placed on the table, along with institutional racism, prejudice, and the changing nature of the economy, if the full and frank discussion about race advocated by Hacker and others is to be conducted.

One likely outcome of such a discussion might be the discovery that black attitudes are strongly conditioned by the repeated stress on the black community as the helpless victim of white society. Blacks like the writer Shelby Steele and the community activist Robert Woodson have argued persuasively that blacks cannot move forward as long as they see themselves in this way, since it leads to passivity, resentment, and demoralization. Hacker, by contrast, regards victimhood as the defining feature of American blacks, and in a self-defeating vicious circle dismisses any emphasis on personal responsibility and self-discipline as merely the latest weapon in white America's ongoing project of racial humiliation.

HACKER's approach to the critical question of out-of-wedlock births is even more shocking than his treatment of employment. Thus, he makes much of the fact that over the past several decades there has been a proportionately higher increase in unmarried parents among whites than among blacks, the point being that whites have no standing to sermonize about the structure of the black family. Hacker may consider this an effective debater's point, but it is irrelevant, or worse, to any serious examination of the dynamics of black poverty, and is a piece of blatant evasion from a writer who takes pride in candor and plain speaking.

For one thing, there remains a huge difference in the proportion of single parents among blacks and whites. More to the point, a phenomenon which for whites represents a serious but contain-

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able problem is for blacks something truly catastrophic, as can be seen by reading the biographies of the teenagers who kill other teenagers over something so trivial as who was first in line at a fast-food restaurant. Almost always, the assailant is a black boy who knew his father fleetingly, if at all.

Hacker is just as bad on the question of education as a vehicle for racial progress. He suggests, correctly, that there is a genuine clash between the goal of employing more black teachers and the challenge of strengthening national educational standards. In states which have devised tests to measure teacher competence as part of a reform package, white teachers have consistently and by wide margins outperformed blacks. In a typical situation, 75 percent of a state's white teachers will pass competency tests, as compared with 45-50 percent of black teachers. In one state, Louisiana, the rate for whites was 78 percent; for blacks, it was a dismayingly low 15 percent—meaning that white teachers were five times as likely to achieve a passing mark.

Hacker's analysis of scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) also makes for disturbing reading. On this examination, so critical for college admission, blacks lag not only behind whites, but behind the sons and daughters of recent immigrants from Asia and Latin America. This is true even when the comparison is limited to low-income immigrants whose mastery of English is weak. In 1990, whites and Asians scored some 200 points higher than blacks on average, a huge difference. Hispanic students scored almost 70 points higher, even though their income levels were about equal to those of blacks, even though a similarly low percentage of their parents had attended college, and even though two-thirds of them described English as their second language.

It has, to be sure, been argued—and Hacker appears to agree—that the SAT is culturally biased against blacks. But he adds the intriguing observation that it is not so much "white" values which are reflected in standardized examinations as values which demonstrate a familiarity with the skills necessary to cope with the modern world generally. These modern skills and ideas may have had their origin in the United States and Europe, but through the globalization of the economy and the spread of mass communications they have by now filtered through to what was once known as the third world. It is this transnational flow of values, Hacker contends, which accounts for the impressive performance of recent immigrant children on American standardized tests.

The unsettling implication of this analysis is that within black America there is a generation of young people totally unprepared for modern economic competition. Is this, as Hacker insists, due to white racism? Or are there other causes—sensitive factors relating to the culture of inner-city life—which must eventually be addressed? How does Hacker's one-track explanation square with the fact that the earnings of black women have reached over 90 percent of average white female earnings? Or with the fact that college-educated black women earn *more* than comparably educated white women?

In times past, even during the pre-civil-rights period, urban blacks moved rather easily into the job market—the private job market, it should be stressed, since it has only been in recent times that blacks have been heavily represented in government employment. Clearly, the white racism invoked by Hacker—the de-facto segregation purposely set up by whites because they consider blacks a "degraded species of humanity"—cannot explain what is happening today. And it certainly cannot point us toward a way out.

IN THE aftermath of the riots of 1992, no institution of American life has been subjected to a scrutiny more intense, or angrier, than law enforcement. And indeed, the most frequent complaint of blacks is that they are systematically mistreated by the police. This complaint has been voiced by black corporate executives, physicians, actors, and university professors, as well as by the inner-city poor, with many black professionals recounting stories of abject humiliation at police hands.

On the surface, the King verdict would seem to reinforce Hacker's thesis of an inherently racist America, where whites automatically identify with state power even when the rights of blacks have clearly been violated. Yet the jury in the King case did not come across in press accounts as comprised of arrant bigots. Interviews with individual jurors reveal men weeping and women praying for divine guidance as a decision was reached, and of twelve average Americans agonizing over every detail of evidence. In other words, the jury was behaving much like juries in other lengthy, highly publicized trials of recent memory. Members of the jury took their mission with dead seriousness, and if, as seems likely, an error was made, it was committed by twelve people who were engaged in an earnest attempt to see that justice was done.

It is also possible that the jurors were motivated by an unconscious bias against blacks. Or, what is more likely, by a combination of attitudes, in which the police were seen as the last defense against society's predatory elements and Rodney King, a large man with a checkered, criminal past, as precisely the kind of person against whom society needs to be protected. If so, the reason can be found in the statistics assembled by Hacker himself, which point to the near-impossibility today of separating the issue of race from the issue of crime.

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Drawing on arrest figures collected from local law-enforcement agencies by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hacker shows that in practically every category of violent crime, blacks are overrepresented by huge margins. Blacks comprise 61 percent of those arrested for robbery—five times their proportion of the population (12 percent). The figure for murder is 55 percent; for rape, 43 percent; for weapons possession, nearly 40 percent; for aggravated assault, 38 percent.

To make matters worse, these statistics are nationwide in scope. They include the states (nearly half) in which blacks make up less than 5 percent of the population, and the many areas of industrialized states where the black presence is minuscule. Obviously, this means that in urban areas the proportion of blacks among the suspects in violent crimes is much, much higher even than the high numbers cited by Hacker.

Even if allowance is made for racial bias among police or for the ability of white criminals to elude arrest, these figures demonstrate, in stark terms, that to regard casually dressed young black men warily is a matter of prudence, not prejudice. The figures do show that in the murder and rape categories, black assailants choose black victims by overwhelming margins. On the other hand, the victims of robbery by blacks tend to be white.

A RELATED issue, from the perspective of the police, is the belief that black criminals are more likely to use violence in resisting arrest. Certainly blacks are better armed than in the past. By some measurements, the Los Angeles riot was less severe and less costly in terms of property loss than previous disorders, some of which raged for days and saw entire blocks destroyed. Yet more deaths occurred in Los Angeles in 1992 than in Newark, Detroit, or Watts in the 60's, and the reason almost certainly was the large number of sophisticated weapons among the rioters and the increased tendency of black criminals to shoot with deadly intent.

As one Los Angeles gang member told Ted Koppel of *Nightline*, the difference between Watts some 25 years ago and the most recent turbulence was the prevalence of Uzis and assault weapons among those participating in the two riots.

Given this lethal combination of skyrocketing violent crime, well-armed criminals, and a long history of hostility between blacks and police, one would expect fatal shootings of blacks by the police to be on the rise. Indeed, within the black community a whole mythology has emerged in which the victims of the police are regarded as heroes of racial struggle. Spike Lee dedicated his movie, *Do the Right Thing*, to blacks who died in controversial incidents at the hands of New York City police, and Hacker seems to feel that blacks are justified in looking upon the victims of police shooting as martyrs.

In reality, however, fatal shootings of blacks by the police have undergone a steady *decline* in recent years, amounting to 40 percent less than two decades ago. The same period has also seen a major increase in the number of blacks in big-city police departments. Nationwide, blacks comprise 40 percent of new police hires over the past two decades, and blacks are well represented on all major police forces, including the one in Los Angeles.

True, blacks are still three times more likely than whites to be killed by a policeman's bullet. But one simply cannot ascribe this to racism, since blacks are also three-to-five times more likely than whites to be arrested for crimes of violence. An interesting sidelight is that those blacks who die at the hands of the police are disproportionately the victims of black policemen. Hacker's comment, typically, is that "now there is a tendency to use blacks to control blacks" in the major cities.

FOR the past two decades, the strategy of America's black leadership has rested on two main pillars: securing jobs in the professions, skilled trades, and government service through affirmative-action programs, and gaining more and more political power, particularly local power in big cities. After Los Angeles, that strategy lies in ruins.

Affirmative action will continue: that was ensured by the passage of the most recent civil-rights act. But court decisions, the general political mood, and the wording of the new civil-rights law itself have combined to make it unlikely that racial-preference programs will expand beyond their current level. And as civil-rights leaders themselves acknowledge, policies of racial preference cannot deal with the problems of the urban underclass, the chief source of racial tension today.

Nor have the black poor derived much benefit from the impressive increase in black political power. Three of the cities hardest hit by the recent wave of disorders—Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Seattle—are led by black mayors, and Atlanta's political establishment is today predominantly black. Black political officials are not responsible for the persistence of poverty and the explosion of inner-city drugs and crime. Nevertheless, whether under white or black leadership, the problems of the black underclass persist. Meanwhile, immigrant groups which have eschewed serious political involvement while focusing single-mindedly on economic achievement continue their march toward integration and prosperity.

Despite the obvious failure of race-specific policies in meeting the needs of the underclass, we can be sure that the riots of 1992 will ignite new and ever more ambitious demands for racially

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balanced juries, police forces, and legislative bodies, along with renewed calls for multicultural education and an Afrocentric curriculum in urban schools. It would be highly unfortunate if such demands were acceded to: they represent an attempt to buy racial peace, similar to the Johnson administration's handing out of anti-poverty grants to youth gangs and posturing militants during the 60's, and they serve to reinforce the dangerous myth that the road to black economic integration will be significantly different from the road taken by all other groups.

On the positive side, the response to the riots has summoned forth a number of voices grounded in common sense and optimism. Of particular note have been the neighborhood activists, those involved in bringing business to black neighborhoods, working with the police to provide better street safety, trying to stimulate a more livable inner-city environment. Where national black leaders harp on the theme of white racism and call for urban Marshall Plans, many local leaders insist that measures be taken to ensure a level playing field for black businessmen and drive home the point that the solutions to the problems of black America will ultimately be found in the inner resources of black people themselves.

After Los Angeles, America has a clear choice in its approach to racial division. It could, on the one hand, follow Andrew Hacker and those, both white and black, who think as he does, into a soul-searching debate over white racism, much like the debate which followed the riots of the 60's. The result, this time, would be similar: bitterness, frustration, and little concrete action. Or we could begin paying heed to people, also both white and black, who have new thoughts about race, and especially new thoughts about reaching the underclass—thoughts based on the centrality of moral and spiritual factors like personal responsibility and initiative. It is this latter course, and only this latter course, that offers the possibility of new hope for blacks, and for all the rest of us as well.

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Losing the Peace

Joshua Muravchik

For most of its history American foreign policy has been isolationist, a tradition broken decisively only in 1948 in response to Soviet imperialism. It was natural, then, that the disappearance of the Soviet empire would spawn a recrudescence of isolationism. The new growth, moreover, has been fertilized by economic hard times and warmed by the hothouse environment of a presidential election campaign.

Despite the hospitable circumstances, however, most of the purer strains of isolationism have failed to take root. Patrick J. Buchanan, in his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, promised to "put America first" by cutting trade, immigration, aid, and the U.S. political/military presence abroad. But Republican primary voters seem to have recognized that America already was "first," and that Buchanan's platform would only squander that position. And on the Democratic side, Senator Robert Kerrey's pledge to guard American shores like a hockey goalkeeper, deflecting any Sonys or Hondas the Japanese might shoot our way, was laughed out of the race.

Nonetheless, milder strains of isolationism have flourished. Harris Wofford, a Democrat, campaigned successfully for Pennsylvania's vacant seat in the U.S. Senate on the slogan, "It's time to take care of our own." True, no sooner had he won his upset victory than he tried to dispel the isolationist label by taking a seat on the Foreign Relations Committee and writing an article for the journal *Foreign Affairs*. Yet the article only confirmed what it intended to deny. Wofford called for "a new constructive, nonmilitary approach to the rest of the world," based on cutting defense expenditures by more than half and recognizing that "What the world needs most from the United States is that we succeed in solving our own most critical economic, educational, and environmental problems." As for the committee assignment, it appears that Wofford, like so many before him, sought a place on Foreign Relations not out of enthusiasm for America's role overseas but to help constrain our "arrogance of power."

The latest struggle of the American body politic with the isolationist virus came most clearly into focus in the uproar over two memos that made their way into the headlines in March 1992. One was by former President Richard Nixon, who chastised "the West" for failing "to seize the moment to shape the history of the next half century" by furnishing generous aid to Russia in its passage to freedom. The other memo, attributed to Under Secretary of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz, was a draft of "guidance" to U.S. military planners. It defined America's "first objective" as

> prevent[ing] the reemergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union.

What was remarkable about the Nixon memo was not its content. Indeed, except for some hyperbole, Nixon's points should have been obvious: that the collapse of Soviet Communism constituted a "watershed moment"; that the West's "stakes could not be higher" in the effort of the Yeltsin government to lead its nation to democratic capitalism; that failure in Russia would give rise to "a new, more dangerous [here, the hyperbole] despotism"; that therefore the West "must do everything it can to help"; and that measured against this standard, Western action had so far been "pathetically inadequate."

What *was* remarkable about this memo was that Nixon, nearly twenty years after having been compelled to leave the White House in disgrace, was offering the leadership that its current occupant was failing to provide. Buchanan's primary challenge to George Bush, with its fulminations against foreign aid, had struck the administration dumb on the subject of assistance to the states trying to move from Communism to democratic capitalism. But as Nixon rather pointedly observed, though

> the American people overwhelmingly oppose all foreign aid . . . the mark of great political leadership is not simply to support what is popular but to make what is unpopular popular if that serves America's national interest.

Joshua Muravchik is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of *Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America's Destiny*, which will be brought out in a revised paperback edition by AEI Press this month.

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As if to illustrate Nixon's emphasis on the centrality of leadership, within weeks Bush followed his predecessor's lead by announcing a new aid package for Russia. "The stakes are as high as any we have faced this century," Bush said. "Democrats in the Kremlin can assure our security in a way nuclear missiles never could." In a further reprise of Nixon, the President added:

> The failure of the democratic experiment could bring a dark future—a return to authoritarianism, or a descent into anarchy. In either case, the outcome would threaten our peace, our prosperity, and our security for years to come.

The package was pegged at $24 billion collectively from the G-7, the club of advanced industrial democracies. The administration soon confessed, however, that it could not say exactly what this figure comprised, or whether it was all to be new allocations or included sums previously announced. Nor could it specify the exact size of each contributor's share, not even that of the U.S.

In the days that followed, the American contribution was estimated at from $3 to $5 billion, and a good part of that, administration spokesmen hastened to explain, would be repaid or even never spent at all but used as a guarantee. Although the sums were not trifling ("a billion here, a billion there," the late Senator Everett Dirksen once quipped, "and pretty soon you're talking real money"), the investment, judged by the standards of the federal budget, hardly seemed equal to the stakes the President described. "The aim," reported Andrew Rosenthal in the New York *Times*,

> was to allow Mr. Bush and leaders of the other countries to . . . show that the industrial giants were seizing the moment to spur democracy in Russia—without asking their taxpayers to spend any more cash.

Modest though it was, the President's proposal did not go unchallenged. House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt tried to link the Russian aid to a bill to enlarge unemployment benefits in the U.S., while Majority Whip David Bonior tried to tack on a domestic job-creation bill. Yet another Democrat, Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, debunking Bush's assertion that Russia's predicament constituted a "defining moment" for world history, declared: "For an awful lot of people in this country, defining moments are happening every day."

Despite the opposition, the aid seemed assured of passage. And despite its modest scope, it began to pay dividends even before enactment when leaders of the Yeltsin government used it to help beat back a stiff challenge in the Congress of People's Deputies by unrepentant Communists aiming to reverse free-market reforms.

The Pentagon memo aroused even fiercer opposition among Democrats. Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia denounced it as "myopic, shallow, and disappointing." Senator Alan Cranston of California waxed indignant that the memo aimed to make the United States "the one, the only main honcho on the world block, the global Big Enchilada." Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware allowed that "American hegemony might be a pleasant idea," but doubted that it would be "economically, politically, or even militarily wise." A spokesman for Bush's Democratic rival, Governor Bill Clinton, said that the memo amounted to "one more attempt . . . to find an excuse for big [defense] budgets."

On the other end of the political spectrum, Patrick J. Buchanan joined in the outcry, branding the memo "a formula for endless American intervention in quarrels and war when no vital interest of the United States is remotely engaged." And even from within the Bush administration, the memo's authors were, as they say, hung out to dry. Thus, the New York *Times* reported that

> one administration official, familiar with the reaction of senior officials at the White House and State Department, characterized the document as a "dumb report" that "in no way or shape represents U.S. policy."

Not surprisingly, then, two months later a new leak revealed that the final version of the guidance had cut the very heart out of Wolfowitz's strategy. "Pentagon Abandons Goal of Thwarting U.S. Rivals," declared the Washington *Post* headline with unintended humor.

What emerges from the story of the two memos is evidence that, with the Soviet threat gone, Americans have not yet decided whether to turn their attention inward until some new menace demands a response or to try actively to shape the international environment so as to prevent such a menace from arising.

Unlike the situation at the end of World War II, when those with eyes to see could recognize the Soviet Union as a looming enemy, the end of the cold war leaves no comparable threat in view. In this respect, the situation resembles not the aftermath of World War II, but rather the period following World War I, when Germany was whipped and all of Europe's old empires, whose machinations had caused the war, had collapsed just as the Soviet empire has now done.

Then, too, America was divided. Some, including President Woodrow Wilson, wanted an internationalist America to forge instruments designed to safeguard the peace. They lost out, however, to those who wanted to turn inward and take care of our own. The doughboys sang:

> We drove the Boche across the Rhine,
> The Kaiser from his throne.
> Oh, Lafayette, we've paid our debt,
> For Christ's sake, send us home.

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In 1919, like today, the economy stumbled, and race riots broke out in American cities. "It is not that which is happening in Russia . . . that is bringing doubt and worry to our own people," said the famous Progressive, Senator William Borah. "It is the conditions here in our own land. . . . Capitalism must turn its eyes inwardly . . . and solve its own internal problems." The poorer nations, warned the self-proclaimed "nationalist" and ex-Senator Albert Beveridge, were out to make Uncle Sam the "paying teller" of the world. "The United States can best serve the world," declared Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, "first, by preserving its own strength and the fabric of its civilization." American participation in the Great War soon came to be widely regretted, and, as the historian Selig Adler recalls, "Endlessly, people calculated how many hospitals could have been built, libraries opened, and colleges endowed with the money spent."

In 1919, Lenin was already in power in Russia, but most qualified observers doubted his regime could last. And though it inspired fear, the fear was, as the quote from Borah suggests, that Bolshevik ideology would be contagious, not that the Bolsheviks would succeed in transforming Russia into a military leviathan capable of holding the entire world, America included, at risk. Nor in 1919 did anyone foresee that an insignificant dreamer named Adolf Hitler would soon dispose of power sufficient to visit upon mankind horrors of unprecedented dimension and that we would have to spend the rest of the century fighting for our lives first against him and then against Lenin's posterity.

The question, then, is whether threats may emerge that will be as novel and unexpected to us as Nazism and Communism were to our grandparents. Since the unforeseeable is by definition impossible to foresee, we cannot answer this question. Yet neither is the answer written in the stars. For the likelihood that some serious danger will present itself—a new malign political force, or a burgeoning regional war that draws us in, or something else altogether—will, as Zbigniew Brzezinski has observed, "depend . . . very much on what the United States does—or does not do."

The past is no certain guide to the future, but the evidence of our experience is dramatic. After victory in World War I we turned inward and reaped unprecedented catastrophe. After World War II we assumed the burdens of international engagement and were rewarded by a triumph beyond our fondest dreams. We faced the most puissant enemy we or anyone had ever known, and we brought it down without having to fight a big war.

Now, in the wake of that triumph, which course recommends itself? Those who would have us choose the one followed after 1919 try to deflect the comparison by asserting that they are not "isolationists." But so did their progenitors. Senator Lodge, leader of the opposition to the Versailles peace treaty of 1919, declaimed:

> Those who . . . wish the United States to become an integral part of the European political system, use the word "isolationist" in order to discredit those who differ with them. There is no such thing as an "isolationist," of course, in the United States, and there never has been. . . .

Perhaps so, but the choice is still between an orientation that turns overwhelmingly inward and one that continues to devote a considerable measure of attention and treasure to the world outside.

OF WHAT does the latter course consist today? It begins, we could say, with the policies adumbrated in the Nixon and Wolfowitz memos (the original Wolfowitz memo, not the "revised" edition). If Russia were to succeed in establishing a viable democracy and a market economy, the only military machine rivaling our own would then be allied with ours rather than actually or potentially opposed. The source of arms for many vicious governments and groups would remain capped. The psychological impact of entry into the democratic camp by the great font of anti-democratic ideology would give added momentum to the global tide of democratization. And, in time, commerce with this resource-rich country would enhance our own prosperity.

On the other hand, if Russia should fail, the consequences would be grave indeed. If a new dictatorship were to replace today's democrats, it would be unlikely to follow Yeltsin's benign policies of renunciation of imperial claims, friendliness to the West, and transition to capitalism. Contrary to Nixon, a new dictatorship would in all probability not be worse than Communism, but it could still be quite malign—surely nationalistic, perhaps xenophobic, conceivably fascistic. This would bode ill for those Russians most receptive to Western values and probably for Jews and other vulnerable ethnic minorities as well.

It might also bode ill for peace, for such a regime would surely not be pacific, nor would it resist the temptation to blame others for Russia's woes. Conflicts among the former Soviet republics would become almost inevitable. And war between, say, Russia and Ukraine would be no localized battle, like those the Serbs have been waging on their neighbors in what was formerly Yugoslavia, but a large-scale European war. Perhaps the U.S. could remain aloof; perhaps the rest of Europe could. But we have seen more than once in this century how hard it is to stay out of such wars.

If democracy should fail in Russia, the alternative to a new tyranny would be anarchy, perhaps with regional warlords ruling various corners of that vast land, and with criminal or police gangs holding sway in urban areas. This would be a sad

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scenario but also a dangerous one. The former Soviet Union is home to 27,000 nuclear warheads and the components, blueprints, facilities, and personnel to produce more, not to mention other kinds of destructive devices. Even with a completely cooperative Russian government still firmly in the saddle, we are struggling to prevent this vast reservoir of annihilative agents from seeping into the watertable of world politics. In circumstances of anarchy the task would become hopeless.

Alas, it is not within our power to assure the success of Russia's transition, but we can certainly help. It was argued a year or two ago that aid to the USSR would only obviate the deep economic changes that Mikhail Gorbachev seemed ever hesitant to undertake. But Yeltsin has bitten the bullet, gambling all his political capital as Russia's first elected leader on a fast-track transition to capitalism, beginning with the perilous step of raising prices. Opinions differ about the best order in which to take the various steps of this journey—freeing prices, selling off state firms, making currency convertible—but there is no doubt that Russia, like Poland and several other formerly Communist countries, has now embarked. Aid can and should be contingent on its continuing on course.

Foreign aid, to be sure, has a mixed record, though few doubt that the Marshall Plan paid off handsomely, as did the assistance given simultaneously to Japan and to a lesser extent to Taiwan and South Korea. Still, the failure of aid to make a dent in the misery of many third-world states—indeed, the use of aid to underwrite self-destructive statist economic policies—has given rise in some quarters to a skepticism so deep that it goes beyond the claim that aid has often been wasted. This view holds aid to be ineluctably detrimental, a source of dependency and market distortions. But which of these deep skeptics has the courage of his convictions? Who among the supporters of the government of El Salvador during the 1980's opposed giving it aid; who among the boosters of the guerrilla war against that government wanted the aid to go on? And who among the opponents of Castroism has pleaded with Russia to continue its subsidy to Havana so that the detrimental effects of aid would bring Fidel down faster?

Some worry that aid only strengthens governments, when the real need is to strengthen private sectors. But the main kinds of aid under discussion for the former Communist states—debt relief, currency stabilization, technical assistance, education and training, investment insurance, and infrastructure restoration—are more likely to spur than to retard the private sector. Such aid is not likely to usurp the place of private businesses; neither will private business be usurped by humanitarian assistance in the form of food, medicine, and other immediate necessities that will strengthen the thin social safety net and thus might serve to buy precious time politically to ride out the shocks of economic shock therapy.

Even if aid works poorly it may yield rewards. After all, hope and optimism are not just spiritual goods, they are important factors in economic activity. By extending our hand to the bewildered survivors of Communism we can enable them to function better, and we may influence their feelings toward the United States for years to come—not an insignificant consideration for a country with an unpredictable future that remains the sole possessor of machines capable of destroying us.

But can we afford to give billions to Russia and other formerly Communist states in the face of our own recession and large budget deficits? Of course we can. The budget deficit is nothing but the product of our own self-indulgent decisions about taxing and spending, and the recession, for all the hardship it has worked, has not made us a poor nation. On the contrary, despite the recession we enjoy a standard of living about two-and-a-half times as high (in real terms) as we did in 1948. For all the complaints about our schools and health care, the average American completes thirteen years of education today, as compared to nine then, and lives about 10 percent longer.

Nonetheless, in 1948 we launched the Marshall Plan to which, together with other foreign aid, mostly for Japan, we devoted 2 percent of our GNP for six consecutive years. The equivalent amount today would be $100 billion, about twenty times what Bush has proposed to spend helping Russia, ten times more than the most importunate Russians have asked for, five times more than our entire foreign-aid budget with the Russian package added on. Election-year demagogy notwithstanding, foreign aid (about half of which goes for security assistance) accounts for about one-quarter of 1 percent of our GNP, and aid for the countries recovering from Communism would raise that percentage only fractionally.

While doubts about the efficacy of foreign aid have been voiced mostly by conservatives, another line of objection to the new aid that Nixon suggested came mostly from liberals. We should not give aid to other countries, they argued, but to our own; or we should match the two. As Majority Whip Bonior put it: "Is a bridge or an outdated factory more in need of refurbishing in St. Petersburg, Russia than in St. Petersburg, Florida?" Or in the version proposed by Mayor Raymond Flynn of Boston: give a dollar to our cities for every dollar sent abroad.

But the Boniors and Flynns are only appealing here to the perennial unpopularity of foreign aid in order to camouflage an argument about larger issues. These issues are whether we are devoting enough of our income to investment, and if not, whether we should seek to increase investment through the private sector by means of tax prefer-

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ences or through the public sector by means of "industrial policy," urban aid, and the like. Another big issue is whether we should go on borrowing at the rate we have been doing, and if not, how much we should reduce the deficit by raising taxes and how much by cutting spending. Still another is the degree to which government policy should seek to redistribute wealth or income within our nation. How we resolve these issues will have a substantial effect on our collective well-being, but the sums we donate to other nations—including the proposed aid to Russia—are too small to matter much one way or the other.

BY CONTRAST, the sums we spend for defense do matter a great deal. They are about twenty times larger than our foreign-aid budget, and they entail substantial economic choices. The dollars in the pay envelopes of soldiers and defense workers can serve to prime the economic pump, but obviously they contribute less to our material well-being than the same dollars in the envelopes of nurses or construction workers producing goods and services. Yet though in this sense less "productive," defense dollars purchase something more precious than affluence: peace and security.

Our bloodless victory in the cold war has just given eloquent answer to those who asked so insistently why we were "wasting" so many billions on weapons "that will never be used." Rather than digest the lesson, many of these same people now argue that, with the cold war over, we can afford to drive down defense spending virtually without limit. Had we heeded them in the first place, however, the cold war might not have been won, for if the United States had not chosen in the 1980's to hold up its end of the arms race, Soviet rulers might have sought to remedy their economic crisis by means of extortion rather than through the radical reforms that doomed their system.

Still, everyone agrees that the disappearance of the Soviet empire allows a sharp reduction in the size and cost of our own military. Defense spending plummeted by more than 11 percent (in constant dollars) in FY 1991, and the Pentagon's budget calls for further decreases of 3 percent a year until 1995 when it will reach a level of 3.6 percent of our GNP, the lowest share since before World War II, or a little more than half the 6.3 percent spent at the peak of the Reagan rearmament. Ironically, Congress itself, for reasons of patronage and "pork," has prevented the Pentagon from trimming some items it views as expendable.

But for now, in the absence of a Soviet adversary to plan against, what forces do we need? This past February, another Pentagon-planning document was leaked to the newspapers. It outlined seven "scenarios" for wars that might involve the United States. Foreshadowing the scandal that would soon be raised over the Wolfowitz memo, these scenarios evoked indignation. "In a transparent effort to keep the military-industrial complex happy, the Pentagon has conjured up a series of improbable 'resurgent/emergent global threats,' that can justify high spending levels," thundered Hobart Rowen of the Washington *Post*—as if it were wrong for U.S. military leaders to imagine wars that might have to be fought and to think through how to fight them. Nonetheless, Defense Secretary Richard Cheney has rejected basing our military forces on such "scenarios." Not only are we unable to foresee all possible contingencies, he says, but also:

> Oftentimes when we talk about military strategy and military forces we've got a tendency to do it within the context of what kind of war we're going to fight tomorrow. How many divisions are we going to need to take on Saddam Hussein in the Gulf? In reality . . . one of the purposes for having those forces is to be able to actually shape the future itself . . . [to] prevent situations from arising which will otherwise threaten our interest.

Cheney's point against relying only on scenarios is irrefutable, but the question remains: how much military might do we need? The best answer to that can be found in the original Wolfowitz memo: enough to preserve our position as the sole superpower. That is, to assure that no other nation or plausible combination of nations can match our strength.

Such preeminence is not a goal that we consciously sought. We armed in order to defend ourselves against a dangerous foe, accepting a doctrine of "equivalence." But having lucked into supremacy—about as secure a position as a nation can enjoy—why give it up? One reason might be if the costs were unbearable. But it seems clear that we can preserve this position at a level of military expenditure below what we have sustained for many decades—a level equivalent to that of West Germany, whose economic robustness has been pointed to so often in recent years as an example of what low defense spending can achieve.

ANOTHER reason to forgo our sole superpower status might be that it would provoke other nations to band against us. But this is unlikely precisely because American preeminence is not tantamount to "hegemony." America's hegemonic tendencies, whatever they may have been when the country was young, disappeared as it became a mature power. Within North America, the U.S. has long been preeminent, but Washington dictates neither to Canada nor to Mexico. Indeed, during the cold war, Mexico, a country as vulnerable to U.S. power as any, often took Havana's side against Washington—with impunity. Japan and Germany, whom we had helped back onto their feet after the war, have outdone us on some commercial fronts,

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thereby feeding our nettlesome trade deficit, all the while remaining dependent on our military protection.

In truth, it might be said of the America of these past 75 years that never has so much military might whetted so little an imperial appetite. Today, as it was for a period in the late 1940's before the flowering of Soviet nuclear weapons, America is the mightiest nation on earth. But this supremacy has not been exploited, and no one save perhaps miscreants like Muammar Qaddafi and Saddam Hussein is frightened by it. Could the same be said if the position of paramountcy were occupied by the USSR? China? Germany? Japan? France? India?

Indeed, many countries, as Wolfowitz pointed out in his memo, feel safer knowing that American might is out there as a potential makeweight against their neighbors or other regional powers. The maintenance of that might will, if anything, have a soothing effect on the rest of the world—provided that we behave with grace and respect for the pride of others, that we consult and do not bully, that we act cooperatively when possible. Just as American generosity benefits us as well as others, so American strength benefits others as well as ourselves.

But might not American preeminence defeat the cause of international cooperation? The New York *Times* characterized the Wolfowitz memo as "the clearest rejection to date of collective internationalism"; the *Times* columnist Leslie Gelb complained that it contained "practically nothing about trying to nurture collective security through the United Nations"; UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali went so far as to say it would spell "the end of the UN." But in truth, the day of collective security, if it is ever to arrive, will be hastened rather than retarded by U.S. preeminence. In the history of the UN, collective-security actions have been undertaken twice—in Korea and Kuwait. What the episodes have in common is that both times America was the organizer and Americans did most of the fighting. Nothing would have happened otherwise, just as nothing happened in response to the rape of Bosnia as long as the United States waited for others to lead, even though the others in question were the rich, powerful European states most often looked to as a source of leadership alternative to America's.

Despite this experience, in its revised form, the defense guidance places great emphasis on collective action, with the small caveat that "we [cannot] allow our critical interests to depend solely on international mechanisms." Instead of trying to forestall the emergence of a new rival, the revised guidance settles for the goal of "deter[ring] or defeat[ing] attack." And in place of the original memo's willingness to respond "selectively" to threats "not only [to] our interests, but also those of our allies or friends" and to events which could "seriously unsettle international relations," the new version speaks only of "addressing selectively those security problems that threaten our own interests." The practical consequence of these changes is hard to gauge, but they point toward a narrow goal of defending our shores rather than a broader one of preserving the peace.

IF THAT turns out to be our path, we will have wasted a unique opportunity to make the 21st century a far happier one than the 20th century has been. What it will take to exploit this opportunity is the determination to try to shape the peace and an investment on the order of 5 percent of our material product, which under current conditions will suffice to pay for defense, foreign aid, diplomacy, and everything else. This would enable us to further the spread of liberty around the world by offering a boost to the countries in transit from Communism, by continuing the good work of such agencies as the National Endowment for Democracy, by creating a Radio Free Asia to hasten the end of the last vestiges of Communism, and by other peaceful means. The same small expenditure would also enable us to retain military preeminence, not for aggrandizement but to defend ourselves, our allies, our interests, and to help preserve peace.

Five percent is a modest price for the potential benefits. It is modest, too, compared to what the cost might be in dollars, and things dearer, if America were to turn inward, creating a power vacuum that would represent an invitation not to "collective internationalism" but to evil deeds and turmoil. An America with a strong arm and an open hand is the force most likely to keep such new menaces from appearing.

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Reunion

A Story

Gloria Goldreich

I HAD not seen him for many years—I discount the time our cars pulled up side by side at a red light on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv and we shouted each other's names with the hysterical glee of travelers overjoyed to encounter a familiar face on foreign terrain, only to lose each other as the light changed and my husband accelerated with rare venom—and I think it strange that we should meet at such a time, at such a gathering. It is an academic celebration. Our host, Ronald Dorfman, has been awarded tenure after a bitter interdepartmental struggle, but the determined gaiety of the occasion is deflated each hour, when the radio blares the news. Scud missiles are falling on Israel and we are, all of us, consumed by anxiety, news-obsessed and fear-haunted.

"Aviva," he says and walks toward me, his glass of white wine extended as though he means to toast this meeting, this serendipitous reunion.

And, although I have not answered to that name for many years, declining to use it even during the sabbatical year we spent in Jerusalem, I smile in response and lift my hand to his cheek, once pocked by suppurating acne and now raddled by the red-tinged striations of hypertension. So swiftly is the odd intimacy of our adolescence restored.

"Chaim," I reply, using the name he chose for himself all those years ago, but, clearly, he is no longer a Chaim. He is Charles again, or perhaps Chuck, as his mother called him, impeccably dressed in a well-cut dark blue three-piece suit, a pale blue cotton shirt, a narrow maroon tie of pure silk. I know that I am safe in thinking him either a lawyer or a doctor.

"Charles, these days," he corrects me at once, as I knew he would.

"Abbie," I say in turn and we both observe a moment of respectful silence for the girl who had been Aviva and the boy who called himself Chaim. Our vanished selves. And then we stare at each other because of course we must assess the changes wrought by the passing years. He sees that my hair, once long and dark, is now fashioned into a smoke-colored helmet, that although my face is still too thin and angular, I have lost my waistline and my wrists and ankles are thick and shapeless. I note that he has balded in a curious way, the hair loss concentrated at the center of his head so that the triangle of his freckled, pink scalp is fringed by tufts of rust-colored hair, threaded with gray. I remember how his hair had clustered in red-gold curls about his narrow head and how he had hated that radiant tangled thickness and tried, without success, to comb it flat. I see, too, that he has a small but firm pot belly which even his tailor's expensive expertise cannot disguise and I think of how skinny he was, his arms bony, back then in Brooklyn, his legs stick-thin. His mother chased after him with fresh rolls plastered with butter, lathered with cream cheese, which he tossed into the trash can on Brighton Beach Avenue as soon as we were out of sight of his house.

Poor Mrs. Mandell. She feared that he would grow ill because he was so thin. She feared that he would not have the energy to study, that he would not be inducted into Arista, the honor society, that he would not score high on his college boards and the world of academic achievement, the springboard to professional success, would be lost to him forever. I wonder if she is still alive and if she is gratified by the plumpness of his maturity. She herself was a very thin woman whose neatly ironed cotton dresses were always a size too large, as though she too hoped that she might one day gain weight, might one day become a woman of substance whose son would obey her. And eat. And thus fortified, achieve.

My husband, Len, waves to me from the punch bowl across the room where he is engrossed in earnest conversation with a colleague who also teaches American Studies. Len is an authority on 19th-century transcendentalism, an odd field of concentration for the son of immigrant parents. We often point this out at dinner parties after which Len recites scraps of Emerson which he has translated into Yiddish and everyone laughs. We are, ourselves and so many of our friends, so many of those gathered tonight in this Riverside Drive apartment with its wall-to-wall bookshelves and woven rugs, bemused and secretly self-congratulatory because we have traveled such vast distances from the ambience of our childhoods.

GLORIA GOLDREICH is a novelist and short-story writer. Her new novel, *Years of Dreams*, has just been published by Little, Brown.

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The sons of men who rode the subway climb into their Volvo station wagons. The daughters of women who wore plaid housedresses dress in tweed suits and silk blouses and sit at polished desks in well-appointed offices.

Len flashes me a smile, raises a quizzical eyebrow of curiosity. Still, he is pleased that I am talking to someone. It frees him from responsibility. I smile back. Chaim (whom I must remember to call Charles) beckons to a tall blonde woman. I take note of her cowl-necked, black cashmere dress, adorned with a heavy silver pin of stark geometric design. She, however, smiles regretfully, points to the kitchen and disappears behind its swinging doors. She is the sort of competent woman who helps hostesses arrange crudités in attractive formation, who can be relied on to see that the coffee is brewed, the creamers filled. Laura Dorfman, an overworked therapist who sits on too many committees, who does not like giving parties, relies on her now.

"Your wife?" I ask.

"Vivian." He offers her name with the shy pride peculiar to men who remain awed by the happiness of their own marriages, by the attractiveness of the women who, against all odds, have consented to be their wives.

"I hear that she's very talented," I say, startled that I should have remembered that. "Oh? From whom did you hear that?" His tone is easy but I sense the edge of wariness. The privacy of his present has been invaded.

I struggle to remember who it was who told me that Chaim Mandell had married a successful jewelry designer. It is not a long struggle because the field is very narrow. Death, distance, and disinclination have taken their toll on the friendships of high school. Still, I keep in touch with those few who call and write at infrequent intervals, calls and letters that I return because I am tenacious in friendship, reluctant to surrender intimacy.

"Sue Green," I say at last. "She has a boutique in L.A. I have lunch with her sometimes when she comes to New York. I think she's bought jewelry from your wife for her shop."

"Sue Green?" He frowns.

"She who was Shoshana Bergman. We should all carry identity cards. You know: Aviva Speiser—now known as Abbie Rosen. Chaim Mandell—now called Charles Mandell."

"Mansfield. Charles Mansfield. I changed it when I graduated from medical school." His tone is at once defiant and apologetic.

"A good thing you didn't pick Manson," I say and we both laugh.

THE room grows silent. Someone has switched on the television set. We all lean forward, as though this posture of apprehension, so newly learned, can effectively ward off danger. Air-raid sirens have sounded in Tel Aviv, the correspondent in that city tells us, speaking through the absurd yet frightening gas mask that causes him to resemble an oversized anteater. Another Scud attack is anticipated. My heart hammers and my throat is dry until, after some minutes, an all-clear is reported. The television set is switched off. Conversations are resumed, voices rising with shrill relief, laughter rasping nervously as the same jokes travel from group to group. "Did you hear about the Polish paratroopers who jumped into the Gulf? The Mexicans don't know what to do with them." "Knock knock. Who's there? So Damn. So Damn Who? So Damn Insane."

"We had no jokes," I say sadly, almost accusingly, "back then."

Back then. The days when we shuddered for Israel's survival as we shudder for it now.

"Maybe we didn't need them," he reflects. A thoughtful man as he had been a thoughtful boy. "We were too busy for trivia. School, meetings. Working the subway every Sunday."

"Oh yes. The subway." I laugh so harshly and so loudly that Sharri Dorfman, who is circling the room with a tray of hot miniature egg rolls, turns to stare at me. Sharri, who wears a bright red jump suit and dangling gold earrings, her blonde hair sprayed with scarlet dust, holds the tray out to us and we each gravely take an egg roll and carry them to the window seat where we watch the lights of the Drive and follow the progress of a single tug bravely making its way across the ink-dark water.

"How old is Sharri?" I ask. "Fifteen. Sixteen. About as old as we were when we worked the subways."

I try to imagine Sharri in the royal blue middy blouse, laced with red, the uniform of the Zionist youth movement that we had worn on our subterranean excursions. I received my own blouse only two days before Israel became a state, paying for it with my babysitting money. I wore it for the first time on Independence Day.

I wonder if Chaim (*Charles—I must remember to call him Charles*) remembers how we danced a hora on the Brighton Express, weaving our way about the poles while other passengers smiled at us. "*Mazel tov,*" people said to us, to each other.

Two little women, each wearing a light tweed spring coat and clutching an oversized shopping bag, kissed each other and wept before getting off at Union Square.

"At last," one said to the other. "At last."

Shimon, our leader, tall and gaunt, his silken sand-colored hair, as always, falling over his high pale forehead, strummed his guitar and led us out of the train at Times Square. There we unfurled the movement's banner, a white scythe sewn onto royal blue felt, and joined the other young people who had flocked there from every part of the city. Our hora circle encompassed the *Times* tower and we danced and sang, drawing passersby into our circle, shouting our slogans of solidarity. "The Nation of Israel lives!" "We will build the Galilee!" "Who will ascend to the land?

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We will—we are coming, we are coming!" I danced with a black woman.

"I'm glad for you people. It gives us hope," she said and after all these years I remember the words and remember too that I did not understand them at the time.

Sharri passes with her tray and Chaim takes yet another egg roll. How proud his mother would have been to see him eat with such zest, I think wryly. I wonder if he remembers how we sat side by side on the journey home and how I fell asleep at the DeKalb Avenue station with my head resting on his shoulder to find his arm around me. He removed it as soon as I awakened, of course, but the others had noticed it.

Only last year, over lunch in the Brasserie, loose-tongued after a single glass of white wine—we children of Brighton Beach never really learned to drink, our heads whirl after a single cocktail and we talk too much after a sip of wine—Sue told me that we were considered to be "a couple." Chaim and Aviva.

"We were kids," he says. "Children. I have a fifteen-year-old daughter. She's a child." His eyes darken and I know this daughter must cause him difficulty. Perhaps she smokes pot. Perhaps she skips school. As my son does. We never even contemplated such misadventures. But then we were children at a different time, of another generation.

WE MET our freshman year at Lincoln High School, both of us the new kids in the class, having moved in when the semester was already in progress, friendships formed, the honor classes chosen. No one waited for either of us when the dismissal bell sounded and we made our separate way to the huge brass-handled doors, crouching next to the wall in the hope that our solitary progress would go unnoticed. Like all adolescents, we perceived our aloneness as a deformity and we dissembled so that we would be spared the pity awarded to cripples. Because he lived on Brighton Sixth Street and I lived on Brighton Seventh, we walked home side by side, but not together. I held my books close to my chest (my *flat* chest, I reminded myself with bitter cruelty each night as I studied my naked body in the mirror, half in hope, half in despair) and I sucked desperately on a long strand of dark hair. I worried that my slip might be showing, that my kneesocks might be falling down, that I could not understand what caused the other girls, who wore club jackets and walked with their arms about each other's waists, to giggle. He carried his books in a heavy briefcase of worn dark leather, unlike the other boys who laced theirs together with a jaunty strap. Thus burdened, he walked with his head bent low, one shoulder askew, like old Mr. Gartenberg, our upstairs neighbor, who sold what my mother called "sundries" and carried his samples with him in a large black case.

We reached his street first and if his mother was home, she would lean out of the window and call to him in an avian screech, flapping her arms in their oversized cotton sleeves.

"Chuck! Chuck!" Her voice was relieved, exultant. Her fledgling had returned to the nest.

He never looked up to wave to her, nor did he look at me, although he always blushed, his skin taking on the wine-red hue peculiar to redheads. It was her use of the nickname that embarrassed him, I decided. I did not know then that it was her very existence that shamed him. We were not a generation proud of our parents.

Only once during that painful semester did we speak to each other. Walking slightly behind me on a June day—a half-day, I remember, because the school year was limping to a close and the teachers were busy counting books, writing up report cards—he hurried to catch up with me.

"There's blood on your skirt," he whispered, careful not to look at me. "I thought you'd want to know."

I had felt the dampness, the beginning of a cramp, and I knew that the long awaited event had happened.

"Thanks for telling me," I said, and, inexplicably, I began to cry.

He did what I realize now was an extraordinary thing. He took off his tan cardigan and tied it around my waist by the sleeves. He walked all the way home with me and at my door, I removed the sweater and returned it to him, relieved to see that it was unstained. I did not thank him. My throat was too dry with sorrow and embarrassment.

We did not see each other that summer. My parents, frightened of polio, took a bungalow in the Catskills and when I returned, two months later, I had a new haircut—a pixie cut, it was called, with bangs that were unevenly cut and that fringed my forehead. I wore a lipstick called Honey, and now owned two white satin bras and two matching sweater sets, one pink and one yellow. But most important of all, I had the beginnings of a life because at that bungalow colony I had met Shimon. He worked there as a lifeguard and he was the *madrich*, the counselor, of the Brighton Beach branch of Hanoar Hatzioni, a Zionist club which he invited me to join.

I went to the first meeting the Sunday night before school was to begin. It was held in Asher Kornblum's unfinished basement, a damp room that fronted Ocean View Avenue and smelled of old clothes and the sea. There was intense talk about Jewish destiny and the Zionist imperative, of the meetings at the United Nations that would decide the Palestine problem.

"We are living in historic times," Shimon said proudly, his gray-blue eyes shining.

We were filled with pride, determined to meet the challenge of those times. We called one another by Hebrew names. I became Aviva. We stood in a circle and held hands and sang "*Hatikvah*"

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before going out into an evening fragrant with the scent of the ocean and the last desperate roses of summer.

I waited outside Chaim's house the next day and I was glad to see that he had discarded the worn briefcase and his notebooks were tied with a strap.

"Did you have a nice summer?" I asked boldly. "It was okay," he replied, and so I knew that it had been long and lonely.

We walked to school together, understanding that things were different now. We were friends.

Because we were friends, I invited him to the next meeting of Hanoar Hatzioni and it was at that meeting that he became Chaim, a name he had not used since his bar mitzvah.

He was my partner in the movement's principal fundraising activity, subway solicitations for the Zionist cause, to raise money for Israel's War of Independence. Shimon issued us flimsy bits of printed paper which he told us were our licenses, and blue-and-white canisters. A senior at Brooklyn College, who left a month short of graduation to fight with the Haganah, came to our basement clubroom to help us write the speeches that would be bellowed above the grinding of the subway trains. He complimented me on mine, a poem of sorts which I belted out shrilly.

"Give! Give so that Israel may live!" was the concluding line which I shouted, clinging to the center pole as the train lurched and swerved through tunnels and onto the elevated track. Chaim patrolled the car as I spoke, shaking two canisters vigorously, jangling passengers into wakefulness and then staring at them accusingly until they shoved a coin or a folded bill into the slot.

We met early on Sunday mornings and boarded the first car of the Brighton Express. I shouted my speech, Chaim made his collection, and we dashed to the next car as the train pulled into a station and there repeated our performance, changing trains again and again. We sometimes traveled as far as the last stop in the Bronx or traversed Queens, encountering members of our own movement or of other Zionist movements—the skull-capped boys of the religious B'nei Akiva, the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair crowd in their unpressed uniforms and bright red ties, and the intense intellectuals of Habonim. We were, all of us, brave soldiers in Israel's army; our royal blue shirts, so carefully washed and ironed by our mothers (who were happy that we belonged to a "Jewish" club), were our uniforms. And, of course, despite the flimsy "licenses" we carried, we were always nervous about being stopped, even arrested, by a transit officer. We had been solemnly warned by Shimon that it was a possibility. My own nervousness was laced with anticipation. Arrest would make me a heroine of sorts. Shimon, who often talked down to me (I was, after all, a high-school sophomore and he was already in college), would see me as a peer, an equal. He might even notice the red highlights in my hair as I noticed the silken texture of his sand-colored cowlick. I imagined myself the Hannah Senesh of Brooklyn, staring out at Shimon from behind bars and telling him that it had all been worth it. I had jeopardized myself for the Zionist cause and for him.

But on the day I was stopped by a transit officer at Prospect Park, Chaim, who was at the opposite end of the car, rushed over to protect me.

"She was only helping me, officer," he said, ignoring the look of annoyance I shot at him.

The Irish transit cop glared at us briefly and then smiled.

"I got to respect you people for what you did to the Brits," he said and forced a folded dollar bill into the canister. "But you're breaking the law. Don't let me catch you again."

It was only noon, but we gave up collecting for the day and went back to Chaim's house. His mother made us scrambled eggs with lox and onions and told me that her Chuck would go to medical school. That had been his father's dream, before his death from a heart attack. The insurance money was put away for that purpose and she supported them on her bookkeeper's salary.

"You put away. You have. Interest." She chirped on in half-sentences while we ate and went to the window to stare down at the street. She sighed deeply because Chaim left half his eggs. She would have sighed with even greater fervor had she known that he vomited up the other half in the men's room of the Oceana. The encounter with the transit officer had upset him greatly.

"What if he had arrested us?" he asked as we walked to the theater.

I knew that he had not been afraid for himself but for his mother.

"Why does she call you Chuck?" I asked.

"She thinks it sounds more American than Charlie or Charles," he replied.

We laughed at her foolishness, we who called each other by Hebrew names, who were familiar with terms like Judeophobia, Jewish identity, Jewish pride. We did not want to be more American. We were all convinced that our future lay with the nascent Jewish state, fighting for its life a world away.

I LOOK at the man who now calls himself Charles Mansfield. I note that his nails are manicured and covered with a pale polish. He must be a surgeon. He follows my eyes and, as though offering an explanation, he says, "I always hated it when my hands were full of sand, when the grit got underneath my nails." I know then that he is thinking of that last summer and, as we look down at the dark water of the Hudson, as we catch the key words of the urgent discussions that dominate this room tonight ("Israel's security . . ." "The right to retaliate . . ." "Scuds." "Oh, the children, the children . . ."), I

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know that such thoughts, such memories, are inevitable. We cannot escape them just because we have changed our names and earned our graduate degrees, because his wife is tall and blonde and because my husband knows how to mock his Jewishness. We are bonded by our memories of sand and sea, of careering subway trains and a hora danced on a day when history was made. But of course I know, as we sit side by side on the window seat and as Ron Dorfman sits down at the piano and plays Broadway show tunes, in an attempt to rescue his party, that one memory dominates and I wonder if either of us will have the courage to speak of it.

We spent the summer of 1948 on Bay One of Brighton Beach. I had adamantly refused to go back to the Catskills bungalow colony. Shimon was going to summer school, most of my other movement friends would be home, and I, who dreamed of confronting Arab armies and hostile transit officers, refused to be cowed by the specter of polio. We sat cross-legged on the sand and passed one another sections of the *Herald Tribune* and the *Times* in the morning, *PM* and the *Post* in the afternoon. We followed the Haganah and Palmach battles in the Negev sands and in the hills of Judea as we spattered oily puddles of suntan lotion on the beach. We argued mightily about whether or not the United Nations truce which was finally imposed in mid-July should have been accepted.

"We should take Faluja," Shoshana Bergman argued. She was a very pretty girl and although she always got lost during subway collections and had once been found weeping on the 42nd Street shuttle, she was an authority on the geography of Palestine and correctly pronounced Majdal and Bet Guvrin.

We flew the blue-and-white movement banner and sat on an army blanket, worn thin in the middle and patched with a red and white checkered terry-cloth dishtowel. Shimon, who had classes in the morning, arrived at noon, carrying his book bag and his guitar. A sad-eyed, thin boy named Herbie sat on a corner of the blanket and played a recorder. It was he who bought us the afternoon papers when he went up to the boardwalk each afternoon to call his mother.

"She has to know I'm all right," he said in answer to Shoshana's teasing question. Everyone carried a Modern Library Giant, the brave bright book jackets speckled with sand and drippings of the Eskimo Pie pops which we bought from Chaim who plodded across the sand in a white shirt and white cotton pants, a refrigerated case slung from his narrow shoulders. Like most redheads, he did not tan but his face became swollen and blotched, its pink cartilaginous surface pebbled with acne. He always gave me a free fudgicle and I always gave him a drink of orange juice from the thermos my mother filled each morning. I saved my extra tuna-fish sandwich for Shimon.

Shimon was taking physics at Brooklyn College that summer in preparation for the course in hydraulic engineering, which he would take when he transferred to Cooper Union. He really wanted to go to law school but he had decided on engineering with a specialty in hydraulics because he had been told by the movement that Israel would need such professionals. There would also be a need for scientists, doctors, nurses, agronomists, teachers, and social workers.

"We must all study for transferable professions," he told us with the quiet certainty of the true believer. "Professions that we can practice here and transfer to Israel when we go on *aliyah*. It doesn't matter what we want to do. What matters is what Israel will need." Shimon received his information at regular meetings held at the movement's national headquarters, an address in midtown which I realize now was probably a starkly furnished rented office, but which I thought of then as a great hall ringing with oratory made all the more forceful by idealism and conviction.

I decided that summer that I would be a nurse, despite my aversion to blood and despite the fact that I had locked myself in the bathroom when a grease fire in the kitchen had blistered my mother's arm. Like Shimon, I would fight my revulsion and deny my own inclinations for the greater good of the nation of Israel. I looked deep into his gray-blue eyes one afternoon and said so, and he rewarded me by gripping my hand very tightly.

"Good for you, Aviva. Good for you."

In the afternoon, when we had wearied of reading, when Shimon had completed his homework, we sang Hebrew songs about the building of the Galilee and the greening of the Negev and we sang all the verses to "On Top of Old Smoky" and mournful choruses of "The Foggy Foggy Dew." Shimon played the guitar and Herbie provided sweet and melancholy accompaniment on his recorder.

Asher Kornblum, overweight and extremely serious—he is a psychiatrist now, with a practice in Tel Aviv and a beautiful villa in Savyon—brought an oversized portable radio each day and on the hour we stopped singing and listened to the news. The fighting was fierce during those early days of July and at least once after each newscast Shimon would sigh deeply and say, "I should be over there."

"But the movement thinks it's more important that you continue your studies," Shoshana would protest.

I was jealous of her because she had accompanied Shimon more than once to national headquarters, because her long blonde hair was the color of butter and smelled of lemons, because she always managed to sit next to Shimon on the blanket and to walk home with him after meetings in the basement clubroom.

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"I hope you don't mind walking with me," she would say, in that small girl voice which she has still not outgrown—I imagine that she uses it now to disarm both her suppliers and her customers as it surely disarmed the two husbands she divorced—"but it's so dark that I get scared. You can just walk me to the corner if you want."

"Don't be silly. I'll walk you to the door." His gray-eyed gaze was warmly reassuring and I envied her that reassurance, that concern. I was angry that Chaim lived so near me, that he was always quick to stand beside me when the meeting ended, so that I could not claim Shimon's protection.

MY HUSBAND, whose eyes are also gray but deeper in color than Shimon's (still, his eyes brought Shimon to mind when I first met him at a party in Cambridge), comes toward us and I move to make room for him on the window seat.

"Len, I want you to meet an old friend, Chaim Mandell—you've heard me speak about him," I say. I am foolishly proud of my husband because he is lean and tall, his face fine-featured, his dark hair, which has not yet begun to gray, attractively unruly.

"Yes. Of course. From your Zionist youth," Len says breezily. "Last seen at a traffic light on King George Street in Jerusalem. You're a friend of Ron's?"

"Actually it was Dizengoff in Tel Aviv. And I've explained to Aviva—Abbie, I mean—that I've been called Charles Mansfield for a good many years now." He blushes as he says this. "My wife and Laura Dorfman went to high school together. As Abbie and I did, of course."

"Yes. Yes, of course," Len says. "You were with Abbie the night of that Sheepshead Bay adventure?" He says this as a question although he knows the answer.

"We never thought of it as an adventure." His reply is stiff, almost angry, and I wonder why Len chose to use that word. But naturally, he distorts and seeks to diminish my past because he has no part in it.

"I think you called for me at my house that night," I say to Chaim, thrusting him into intimacy to punish Len.

"I remember that I did," he replies, "but then I think I remember everything about that night."

Len excuses himself. An administrative dean has just come in, a man who is influential in the dispensation of grant money and Len wants to talk to him about a research project. This takes precedence, of course, over a story which he has heard told too often and which he considers to be exaggerated and if not exaggerated, then foolish rather than heroic. I am in agreement on this last judgment, although I will not tell him so. In retrospect, viewed as I now must view it because I am myself the mother of adolescent children, that night was the zenith of foolish irresponsibility, of arrogant adolescence. But then we were protected by the great cloak of courage that envelops most young people—a courage based on an absolute disbelief in our own mortality. We did not believe that it was possible for anything terrible ever to happen to us; we were immunized against tragedy by our youth, our vitality, our innocence. We crossed against the light, we never checked the brakes of our bicycles, we dashed from car to car on subway trains that catapulted us to unfamiliar boroughs, always laughing when we should have been trembling with fear.

It was Shimon, of course, who devised the plan for that night, which seemed to all of us to be the natural culmination of that summer of song and fantasy, of suppressed yearning and ambitious idealism. We all wanted to do something, to be part of the great historic adventure in which the young Jews of the newly created state of Israel, some of them no older than ourselves, were participating. It was not enough to collect money on trains, to watch our parents write checks, to study maps, and worriedly listen to the news. It was not enough that Shoshana and I had, one sweltering August afternoon, carried shopping bags of discarded clothing for rummage to the Young Israel on Neptune Avenue, where an overworked secretary had directed us to a storage room. Amid the cartons of old winter coats and woollens that stank of camphor, there was a large wooden box, coffin-shaped and covered with a black velvet cloth on which a silver Jewish star had been embroidered with metallic thread.

"A corpse," Shoshana whispered and we giggled and lifted the cloth and then the top of the crate. We stared down at an assortment of rifles and handguns. We knew, of course, that the weapons were destined for the Haganah and, with trembling hands, we covered the crate, replaced the cloth, and dashed downstairs. Our discovery had filled us with pride coupled with a sense of longing. We did not want to stand on the sidelines while exciting things were happening, while a war was being fought. Our war for our own people.

Shimon's plan was just what we wanted at summer's end—a heroic adventure that would sustain us through the boring back-to-school days of an autumn already cool and sere, through a winter when we knew we would see one another less frequently. Our basement clubhouse was unheated and already we were thinking about college, about after-school jobs. Chaim had a job at Aufrichtig's Dairy and I had been hired to shelve books at the Sheepshead Bay branch of the Brooklyn Public Library.

Shimon had read about Jewish sailors who were training for possible naval battles on the Mediterranean coast. Their training exercises were conducted in rowboats and fishing launches. It was Shimon's idea that we simulate such training exercises on the shores of Sheepshead Bay. It would provide us with an excellent test of organi-

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zation and coordination and it would serve a public-relations purpose. The world was unaware of the plight of the fledgling Jewish navy, of the threat to Israel from the sea. He would invite the press. Someone at national headquarters had a contact at the Brooklyn *Eagle*. His uncle knew a *Daily News* photographer. One shot of our group in action would reveal to the world what was happening off the coast of the Mediterranean. As always, Shimon spoke with quiet passion, hypnotizing us with his vision, his sincerity.

"It's a wonderful idea," I said quickly, before Shoshana could say the same thing. Shimon rewarded me with a smile, with the proud toss of his head that sent his silken fair hair cascading across his high forehead.

"But won't it be dangerous?" Chaim asked and I looked at him scornfully.

I did not walk home with him that night although he waited for me at the doorway.

"I have to go to Shoshana's house and get this book she promised me," I said.

"I'll go with you," he offered. "It's not such a great neighborhood where Shoshana lives."

"Then it's probably too dangerous for you," I retorted cruelly.

He blushed and I joined Shimon and Shoshana who were waiting for me, Shoshana still insisting that she could bring the book to school the next day.

"But I want to read it tonight," I said.

I knew that Shimon would have to walk me home after I collected the book. Chaim was right. Shoshana lived on a street that bordered Coney Island, too close to the boardwalk to be considered "safe." Shimon did walk me home and at my door, he kissed me on the cheek. The comradely kiss of an approving counselor.

"You'll be with us on Sunday night?" Shimon asked.

"Of course," I replied proudly and then, to my surprise and surely his own, I stood on tiptoe and kissed him, thrusting my tongue into the moist warmth of his mouth, and then dashed inside. I did not brush my teeth that night. I wanted to keep the taste of Shimon upon my tongue.

Our plans proceeded rapidly. Not only would the Brooklyn *Eagle* and the *News* cover the story, but WEVD had promised to send a reporter. We all learned how to send signals with flashlights and it was decided that Shimon, Herbie, and Asher would sail off while the rest of us waited on shore.

And so, on a soft September night, we met at the intersection of Brighton Beach and Coney Island Avenues, our faces bright with excitement, all of us giddy with energy and pride in our own courage, our own commitment.

We wore our movement shirts and jeans and because we were, all of us, the children of vigilant mothers, we carried sweaters and jackets, thermoses of hot chocolate and brown-paper sacks that held oranges and wax-paper-wrapped salami sandwiches and Dugans cupcakes.

Shimon had impressed upon us that this was a military operation and discipline was necessary. We marched in formation, loudly singing all the songs of the summer, the rousing hymns and the mournful ballads. The Hebrew words, which few of us understood, rose sweetly in our throats and we sang in vigorous unison. We were part of something beyond our lives; we were marching in step with history.

The old people of Brighton Beach, sitting on benches along the shore or in front of their buildings on canvas and plastic folding chairs, hugged their Yiddish papers and stared at us. One stooped old lady went up to Shimon, who led our phalanx, carrying the blue and white Jewish flag provided by "national." She pressed her twisted arthritic fingers to her lips and then to the flag, as though it were a Torah and Shimon, who carried it, a rabbi.

Chaim walked beside me and I shot him a look of sympathy when a voice rang out above our song.

"Chuck! Chuck! Careful. Be careful." His mother's voice was the shriek of a frightened bird, an urgent maternal caw.

At a pier on Sheepshead Bay, we claimed the small craft we had rented. It would be sailed as far as Gravesend Bay for a hypothetical skirmish. We would remain at the pier and when they sailed back, using our newly learned flashlight signals, we would guide the boat to shore.

But there was a problem. Herbie, who had been very quiet on our march, who had not brought his recorder although he was seldom without it, hung back.

"I'm not going," he said. "I can't do it. I promised my mother." His voice trembled and his face was taut with shame and misery but we knew that he could not be coaxed into changing his mind. His mother was a Holocaust survivor. Pale blue numbers marched up her thin arm and she sometimes wept as she pushed her shopping cart through the supermarket. She worried obsessively about Herbie, which was why he called her every afternoon. If he was even a few minutes late getting home, she would phone each of us in turn.

"Where's my boy, my only boy?" she wailed plaintively.

We were patient because we knew that Herbie was her only boy now, but there had been two other sons who had vanished, it was said, in the Vilna ghetto.

"Okay," Shimon said. He pulled a dark wool cap down over his forehead obscuring his soft fair hair. "Any volunteers?"

My heart beat rapidly. The Brooklyn *Eagle* photographer had his camera poised. If I moved quickly I could be photographed standing beside Shimon. But Chaim had already stepped forward.

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"I'll go. Me. I volunteer." His voice was loud, almost belligerent, and he stared angrily at me. I looked down, at once proud and ashamed.

We launched the craft in a rush of excitement and song at eight o'clock. It was a moonless night and we had a marvelous time waving our flashlights, using the signal code that Shimon had taught us, the messages flitting from ship to shore like bright fireflies until the small boat drifted into the darkness. We built a campfire and ate our sandwiches and drank our hot chocolate. We danced a hora that began with enthusiasm but grew desultory as the night turned colder and sand crept into our sneakers.

We looked at our watches. Shimon had anticipated that they would be back in Sheepshead Bay by nine o'clock. We searched the darkness and flashed our lights frantically but there were no answering incandescent flickers. At ten o'clock Herbie called the police from a pay phone and the police called the Coast Guard. A squad car arrived.

"Go home," an officer shouted at us. "Go home, you damn crazy kids."

I clutched Shoshana's hand and with tears streaming down our faces, we ran to my house. Chaim's mother leaned out of the window.

"Where is he?" she shouted after me.

But I could not answer her. My voice had deserted me.

We learned, the next day, that a Coast Guard cutter had picked up an exhausted Chaim clinging to the overturned boat and that a fishing boat had plucked Asher, sustained by a life preserver, from the bay waters. But it was not until three days later that Shimon's waterlogged body was washed ashore on the narrow promontory we called Plum Beach.

We wore our movement blue shirts to his funeral. His mother screamed and tore at her black blouse as though to reveal her heart. His father huddled into the dark tent of his clothing and stared at us through red-rimmed watery eyes. He carried the letter from Albany informing Shimon that he had won a New York State Regents Scholarship. It was clipped to a photograph of Shimon, his dark blue wool hat pulled low over his forehead, his lips parted in a smile of excitement—the photograph taken by the Brooklyn *Eagle* photographer which had appeared on the front page of the paper with the story of Shimon's death.

The closed coffin was covered by a black velvet cloth on which a silver Jewish star was embroidered. Shoshana and I looked at each other when we saw it and then averted our eyes. The rabbi told the mourners that Shimon had not died in vain. He had died for the Jewish people. He had died for Zion. We listened but we did not believe him.

After the funeral, Chaim and I went to the esplanade and sat on a broad sun-streaked rock. We watched the crashing waves.

"Were you scared?" I asked him.

"That's a dumb question," he said harshly.

"Why did you go?"

"Because." His voice was sullen. He was angry the I had asked a question to which we both knew the answer.

"I'm sorry," I said and although I had not wept at the funeral, my tears came now and I was glad that my mother had thought to place a freshly ironed handkerchief into the pocket of my royal-blue skirt.

But Chaim took that handkerchief out of my hand. He leaned forward and pulled me toward him. His breath came in rasps as he cupped his hands about my breasts and slid them under my skirt, as he kissed my mouth, pressing his tongue against my own, as he sucked at my neck until he drew blood, holding me so tightly I found it hard to breathe. I did not resist. I understood that this was owed to him because he had come so close to death and that I owed it to him because I had placed him in its shadow.

We walked home as we had walked during the first year. Side by side but not together.

We continued to see each other, of course. We were neighbors, both of us active on the school paper, in the debating society. Boy and girl leaders of Arista. Our mothers sat proudly side by side at our induction. We did not leave the movement but the movement crumbled around us. Herbie moved. Shoshana joined the cheering squad and reverted to calling herself Sue. Chaim went to Columbia and I went to Cornell. The years passed. Our children are older than we were that night at Sheepshead Bay. We shout each other's names at a traffic light on Dizengoff. We meet at this party high above the Hudson on a night when Scuds are falling on Tel Aviv.

"If Shimon were alive, he'd probably organize a simulated Scud attack," the man who calls himself Charles Mansfield says wryly.

"And we would all buy gas masks and go into sealed rooms, having sent news releases to *Eyewitness News*," I embellish.

"Aviva." In that soft utterance of the name I have not used for all these decades, he condenses our history and forgives me.

"Chaim," I reply. The forgiveness is mutual, the disappointment shared. We are, once again, on the wrong shore, agonizing from afar, voyeurs still, despite our pounding hearts, our anxious eyes.

We rise then and wait in a circlet of lamplight for my husband and his wife, who approach us from opposite ends of this crowded room.

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PBS Does It Again

Andrea Levin

OVER the last decade the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has offered its viewers at least fifteen documentaries on the Arab-Israeli conflict, of which no more than three can reasonably be described as balanced. The most stridently propagandistic of these films was *Days of Rage*, aired by the network in the fall of 1989; the program triggered a public outcry, both over the spurious content of the work itself and over the fact that it had received financing from the Arab American Cultural Foundation, whose director, Hisham Sharabi, is a friend and adviser to Yasir Arafat.

Other PBS-sponsored documentaries have been less blatant but no less free of systematic distortion. They include: *The Arab and the Israeli* (1984), in which the two figures of the title, both critical of Israel, are followed on a tour of the United States sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee and the ultra-Left New Jewish Agenda; *The Price of Victory* (1987), in which Israelis are depicted grieving over their country's supposed loss of moral standing as a result of having won the 1967 Six-Day War; *Shattered Dreams: Picking Up the Pieces* (1987), which examines the foundations of the Israeli state and the "widening cracks that threaten to break it apart"; *Daughters of Abraham* (1988), in which a Palestinian Quaker and an Israeli share their distress over the allegedly oppressive actions of Israelis; *A Letter from Palestine* (April 1989), in which Palestinians charge widespread medical abuses and not a single Israeli voice is heard in rebuttal; *Israel: The Covert Connection* (May 1989), in which Leslie and Andrew Cockburn, long-time vilifiers of Israel, portray that nation as pursuing arms sales out of greed, immorality, and a disregard for human life; *Talking to Your Enemy* (1990), in which Palestinians decry alleged Israeli oppression and are seconded by Israelis critical of their country.

To this roll of dishonor must now be added *Struggle for Peace: Israelis and Palestinians*, an hour-long documentary aired in early March of this year. The broadcast is notable on several grounds. For one thing, it marks the first phase of an ambitious PBS venture, "Perspectives on Peace," in which the network means to issue study guides connected with the film, a book of essays by "noted scholars," and a satellite-facilitated, live videoconference featuring audience participation from multiple academic sites. In a promotional pamphlet distributed by PBS, these spinoff "educational" products are described as suitable for use in courses on history, political science, anthropology, feminism, and sociology, and in the activities of various nonacademic organizations, including church and community groups and "peace-studies" programs. The project may thus presage a trend in which the impact of a biased and tendentious film is compounded as its lessons are accorded pedagogical authority and permanence in curricula and libraries.

A second notable aspect of the project is that it, like the documentary film, is directed by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, a professor of English and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas. Elizabeth Fernea has already earned a considerable reputation for partisanship on Middle East issues, dating especially from the controversy over her 1983 film, *Women Under Siege*, a work supposedly intended to examine progressive social evolution in the lives of Palestinian Arab women in a Lebanese refugee camp. The film, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), elicited sharp criticism for its stridently pro-PLO tilt. William J. Bennett, then chairman of NEH, termed the work "propaganda" and a "political tract" that should never have received federal money. Another NEH official charged that the piece "glorifies the PLO." Evidently, however, Fernea's record of tendentiousness has not deterred PBS from sponsoring her new documentary.

Fernea is, in fact, a veteran activist in promoting Arab views to American audiences. Along with George Ball and Gary Sick, she is a member of the board of governors of the Middle East Institute, a quasi-academic, pro-Arab group heavily drawn from State Department retirees and former oil-company executives. The Middle East Institute sponsors conferences, issues publications, and distributes grant money to pro-Arab causes and has displayed a particular interest in American schools. The study guide for Fernea's "Perspectives on Peace" was financed by a $23,000 grant from the Institute, and the documentary itself was underwritten in part by the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO).

THE documentary's format runs true to type, featuring interviews with a wholly *un*representative set of Israelis and Palestinians and proffering their views as the truest

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ANDREA LEVIN *is national president of CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America). Her article is the second in our new department,* Israel Watch, *a feature devoted to countering the stepped-up ideological and political war against Israel. This department was inaugurated last month with David Bar-Illan's "The Patriot Smear & Its Progeny."*

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and sincerest representation of the conflict and, as well, the foundation of any hope for peace. Along the way, it erases or distorts any and all historical facts which contradict the premise that Israel bears total responsibility for the plight of the Palestinians and the absence of peace; omits all reference to the virulent anti-Semitism of Arab governments and the PLO and the campaigns waged by these parties to annihilate the state of Israel; ignores current military threats to Israel; slights the historical roots of the conflict as well as the historical obligations and responsibilities of all parties under international mandates; focuses narrowly on Israel's allegedly brutal response to civil rebellion and on the resentments of Palestinian Arabs under Israeli control; and reiterates ceaselessly that the route to peace lies through Israel's unilateral relinquishing of the West Bank and Gaza.

Fernea has candidly stated her agenda in this documentary: "To give a mass [American] television audience images of people with whom they can identify." In pursuit of that agenda she freely mangles the Middle East landscape. Thus, most egregiously, her spokesmen for the Palestinian cause are not Muslims but Christians: a priest from Jerusalem; a principal at a Friends School; and citizens of the Christian village of Beit Sahur, including a "civic leader" whose long ancestral claim reaches back to the "shepherds' field when they got the first good news from the angels about the birth of our lord Jesus Christ." (Is the viewer therefore to understand that the man's ancestors were Jews? Somehow one doubts it.)

Fernea's reliance on these Palestinian "spokesmen" is deceptive in the extreme. Christians comprise only 5 percent of the Palestinian population, and their status within the Palestinian Arab community has long been a tenuous one. Prior to Israeli rule, when Jordan and Egypt respectively governed the West Bank and Gaza, pressure by the Muslim Arab majority precipitated a drop in the number of Christians living in those territories from 80,000 in 1948 to 32,000 by 1967. In East Jerusalem, among the discriminatory practices enacted by the Jordanians were a prohibition against Christian purchase of property, the denial of permits for the construction or refurbishing of Christian institutions, the forced closing of Christian schools and businesses on Fridays (the Muslim holy day), and the compulsory teaching of Islamic studies in Christian schools. Today, in all Muslim-dominated territories, Christians (along with other minorities) exist under threat from the forces of Islamic fundamentalism; an attack this past April on a Christian village and school in Egypt left fourteen dead. (By contrast, within Israel itself, where all religions enjoy legal and political freedoms, the number of Christians has *grown* from 34,000 in 1948 to 130,000 today.)

None of these realities, current and historic, is addressed in the documentary, which instead presents Christians as exclusive representatives of the Palestinian Arabs. Christian imagery is constantly invoked to underline Palestinian attachment to the land. When the narrator observes, "Images of faith and national struggle mingle on [the streets of Beit Sahur]," choir music swells. There are many scenes of priests and candles and Christian ceremony. By this means, American audiences are indeed given "images of people with whom they can identify"—it just happens that the religious affiliation of 95 percent of Palestinian Arabs gets eclipsed in the process.

AT THE same time as Palestinians are revealed to have a deep religious attachment to their land, the age-old Jewish religious associations with the land of Israel are wholly neglected. Insofar as any Jewish link to the land is acknowledged, it is shown as a secular, political one. A military ceremony commemorating Israel's "fallen heroes" and "the founding of the nation" reinforces the rhetorical point of the film—that whereas, for Palestinians, the quest for peace and justice is inseparable from a deep connection to the land of their fathers' faith, hard-minded Israelis of indeterminate religion are, for no good reason, preoccupied only with issues of security. It would have thoroughly undermined the purposes of this film to have brought on, for example, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, the spiritual leader of the Palestinian Muslim majority, who in the summer of 1989 offered his own vivid opinion on the subject of the Arab quest for peace: "Kill the Jews until the stone shall cry, 'Oh, Muslim, this Jew is hiding beneath me, come and kill him.'"

Israelis interviewed in the film give an equally false indication of the general tenor of the Israeli public. Ostensibly "ordinary," they are, in fact, among a tiny minority—men who agree to fulfill their military service only if assigned to areas outside the occupied territories, women who dress in black every Friday and display signs demanding Israeli withdrawal from those territories. As for the concerns of truly "ordinary" Israelis, i.e., the majority who continue to express a willingness to compromise with the Arabs but harbor very concrete fears about the military threat posed by surrounding Arab states and the continuing terror attacks of the PLO and kindred Arab groups, these are simply ridiculed. Through the pensive voices of the Israeli "Women in Black" on the one hand, and through the views of Palestinian "agriculturists," priests, and "civic leaders" on the other, we learn about the seemingly absurd actions of the Israeli government preventing Palestinian Arabs from planting trees and vegetables, or acquiring a dairy herd—as if these were the sorts of dangers the Israeli public and military truly fear. Needless to say, no Israeli government voice is permitted at any time to provide an explanation or response to any of the charges leveled.

THE idea of the Arabs as blameless victims of Israeli aggression is echoed in the film's presentation of the Arab-Israeli wars of the last 45 years:

> Israelis celebrate victory and independence and every year Palestinians honor their martyrs who fell protesting Israeli occupation of their land. Palestin-

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ians' memories are of loss and defeat. What is at stake is the right to land. Israelis and Palestinians both claim the land ruled by the British in 1948. In that year Israelis defeated Palestinians and other Arabs and founded the nation of Israel. In the Six-Day War of 1967 Israel again defeated the Arabs and occupied the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip.

In other words, the history of the Middle East conflict begins not in 1920, when the League of Nations granted the British a mandate over Palestine for the explicit purpose of creating a Jewish national home there, but in 1948, and that year saw not an assault by five Arab armies and by Palestinian militias in an attempt to destroy the nascent Jewish state, but a "defeat" visited upon the Arabs without any evidence of belligerency on their side. Similarly with 1967, another occasion of "defeat" in which, presumably, the Arab declarations in May and early June that the time had come to destroy Israel, and the massive mobilization of Arab armed might to achieve that purpose, never occurred.

THE historical falsehoods promoted by the film are bad enough. Yet they are surpassed by the falsehoods and distortions in the study guide. Therein can be found a version of the Middle East past lifted whole from Arab propaganda. A three-and-a-half page chronology enumerating events in the period 1850-1991

- reiterates the fraudulent theme that modern-day Israel is an artificial creation of European Jews collaborating with the British against native Arabs, omitting any reference to the millennia-long ties of the Jewish people to the cities and towns of the region;
- omits any mention of the origins of Transjordan (now Jordan), created in 1921 by the British who simply carved away 70 percent of the territory allotted for the Jewish homeland, expelled all Jews from the area, and handed it over to the Hashemites;
- fails to cite the 1929 Arab massacre in Hebron, which wiped out the ancient Jewish community there;
- refers to the terror campaign between 1936 and 1939 as an "Arab rebellion," with no mention of the 517 Jews whose lives were taken by rioting Arabs;
- ignores the concerted Arab/British campaign forcibly to prevent Jews fleeing Nazi Europe from entering Palestine, an action which cost hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of lives;
- omits *any mention* of the Holocaust;
- fails to note a single act of terror perpetrated by the Arab states, the PLO, the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas organization, or any Arab group against Jews, including the myriad instances of hijacking, hostage-taking, and murder of children, athletes, tourists, commuters, and worshippers;
- notes the creation of the PLO in 1964 and the formulation of its founding principles but makes no reference to the content of those principles as articulated in the PLO Covenant, which stresses the illegitimacy of Israel and the implacable determination of the PLO to destroy it;
- describes the Six-Day War in terms ("Israel occupies the Sinai as far as the Suez Canal, the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip") which, like the film, evade entirely the issue of the declared Arab intention to annihilate Israel;
- passes in silence over the dramatic concessions—including the entire Sinai, with its oil fields, settlements, and air bases—made by Israel in exchange for a peace treaty with Egypt under the Camp David accords;
- omits any reference to Syria's takeover of Lebanon;
- and so forth.

IN ADDITION to the "chronology," the study guide includes an essay by an Israeli revisionist historian, Joel Beinin. Beinin is a member of the advisory committee of the Jewish Committee on the Middle East, an organization that has placed ads in magazines and newspapers branding Israel a racist, militaristic state in which "injustice prevails." His essay consists mainly of an attack on Israel's contention that many Palestinians who left the state during the War of Independence in 1948-49 were fleeing on their own volition or at the behest of the Arab invaders (he asserts instead that they were driven out), and charges that Israel is guilty of many more atrocities than anyone realizes. The guide offers no mainstream perspective or rebuttal to these charges, all of which have been discredited by an array of reputable scholars.

In fact, *every* component of Elizabeth Fernea's "Perspectives on Peace" is suffused with distortions of history and present-day reality, being designed to project an Arab cry of innocent victimization that will find, as she hopes, sympathetic resonance both among PBS's television audience and among the innumerable students and other American citizens who will use the accompanying "educational materials."

It is alarming and disgraceful that the Public Broadcasting Service, which has repeatedly lent its prestige to the presentation of a skewed vision of Middle Eastern reality, in violation of its own written statutes mandating objectivity and balance on controversial subjects, should still be endorsing, promoting, and disseminating such contaminated stuff.

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Modernity

THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN: WORLD SOCIETY 1815-1830. By PAUL JOHNSON. *HarperCollins. 1,120 pp. $35.00; $16.00 (paper).*

Reviewed by NORMAN GALL

FROM the terrible conflicts of this century we have learned that, in addition to the devastation they wreak, big wars can accelerate ongoing innovations in organization and material technologies that will in turn expand the scale, complexity, and logistical reach of those human communities able to recover quickly from the conflagrations. Just so, Paul Johnson boldly argues in this vast and vastly rich book, "the matrix of the modern world was largely formed" in the years between the battles of Waterloo and New Orleans in 1815 and the overthrow of the restored French monarchy in 1830. According to Johnson,

> modernity was conceived in the 1780's. But the actual birth, delayed by the long, destructive gestation period formed by the Napoleonic wars, could begin in full measure only when peace came and the immense new resources in finance, management, science, and technology which were now available could be put to constructive purposes.

By then, thanks to steam power, the world's first passenger railway (Manchester-Liverpool) was running, and nine daily newspapers were being published in London. The same new technology had spawned gunboat diplomacy after the shallow-draft steamer *Diana* penetrated 500 miles up the Irrawaddy River in 1825 to chase a fierce fleet of oar-driven Burmese imperial *praus* until their thousands of oarsmen were exhausted and the *praus* were sunk at leisure by the *Diana*'s guns, proving to one eyewitness that "the muscles and sinews of men could not hold out against the perseverance of the boiling kettle." In politics, Andrew Jackson had led the popular party to victory in America's first modern election, heralding a new "democratic age" marked by

> the growth of literacy, the huge increase in the number and circulation of newspapers, the rise in population and incomes, the spread of technology and industry, the diffusion of competing ideas—and, not least, by the actions of great men.

THE fulcrum and most brilliant chapter of *The Birth of the Modern*, "Forces, Machines, Visions," is about some of these figures, the most compelling of whom were "penniless men with powerful brains and imaginations" who "saw art and science, industry and nature as a continuum of creation. . . ." The chapter opens with a big coal-mine explosion in 1812 that killed 92 men and boys, shocking most of Britain and leading to the invention of a new safety lamp by George Stephenson (1781-1848), "the greatest engine designer and builder of the age, but almost illiterate," born in the coal fields and a descendant of poor shepherds.

Like Stephenson, Thomas Telford (1757-1834), master builder and modernizer of England's basic infrastructure, also came from a family of shepherds. He

> loved to work with his hands, in iron as well as in stone, and his singular virtue was the capacity to combine superb craftsmanship, by himself and others, with a passion for the latest technology and massive powers of organization. He thus rose to build bridges, roads, canals, harbors, embankments, and other public works on a scale not seen since Roman times, to create the first Institute of Civil Engineering and lay down its superlative standards and, at the same time, to remain an artist-craftsman, even a visionary.

The Birth of the Modern is a veritable pageant of such New Men, rising in a "free trade in ability," coming from nowhere to achieve great things.

Some of the New Men, like Beethoven and Goya, sick men driven by their own vitality, embodied artistic suffering as a new form of heroism. Like many other artists of their age, both were associated with technological innovations, Goya in aquatint and etchings, Beethoven with the Broadwood piano, both of which helped create a middle-class market for art and music. Beethoven, the son of a run-of-the-mill court musician and a chambermaid-mother who died of tuberculosis when he was sixteen, "was a key figure in the birth of the modern," writes Johnson, "because he first established and popularized the notion of the artist as universal genius, as a moral figure in his own right—indeed, as a kind of intermediary between God and Man." And Beethoven embodied the spirit of the age in another way as well, for he

> was an increasingly sick man all his adult life and his maladies determined his behavior. He gave vent to the rages of the chronic sufferer from stomach pains and the frustrations of the deaf composer. By a supreme moral irony, his appalling conduct actually sanctified his status as an artistic genius and intermediary between the divine and the human. And that was a sign of the times.

To generalize from this, the incipient modern order was always achieving its (inevitably partial) victories at the edge of turmoil and disorder—or, as Johnson puts it, "The matrix of modernity was corrupt and flawed. The world," he continues, "was becoming one, the wilderness was being drawn into a single commercial system, but there was as yet no acknowledged law." At the edge of modernity's

NORMAN GALL *heads the Fernand Braudel Institute of World Economics in São Paulo, Brazil. He is finishing a book,* The Death Threat, *on the implications of the present cholera epidemic in the Americas.*

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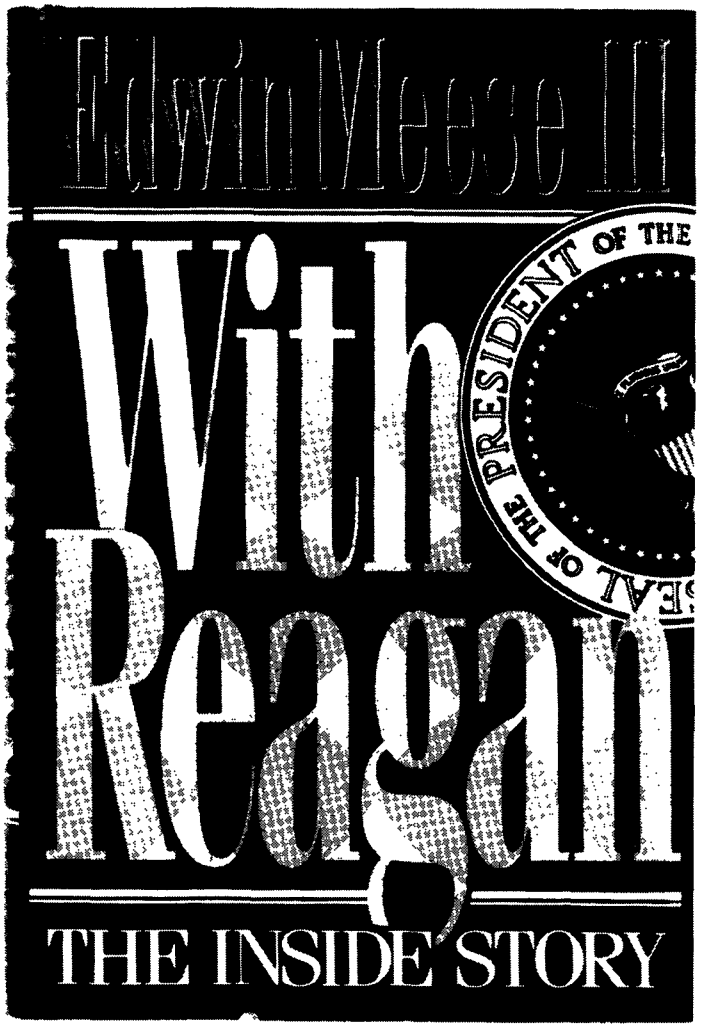

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incipient order, settlement of new lands posed a challenge, still with us today in Latin America, Africa, and the old Russian empire. In Brazil and other Latin American republics, the open spaces bred confusion between the ideas of capital and credit, creating a floating world of chronic inflation, animated by a fantasy of infinite expansion peculiar to the frontier societies of the Western Hemisphere. The United States itself was hardly immune. In the international loan boom of the 1820's, the U.S. "was already creating for itself a reputation for massive borrowing against its limitless future," a robust cultural trait that reemerged with the unprecedented credit expansion of the 1980's.

WITH its masterful weaving of portraits and episodes into long chapters, *The Birth of the Modern* takes on some of the qualities of an epic poem. And indeed, one possible criticism of the book might be that, like an epic, it celebrates more than it explains. Johnson's sweeping narrative, based on prodigious amounts of research, would have been even more impressive had he done greater justice to the long-term forces that bred the civilizational climax of 1815-30.

The essence of modernization has escaped clear definition, not only by Johnson but by most historians and social scientists. The long view is given by the demographic historian E.A. Wrigley, who suggests that "the industrial revolution might be depicted as beginning in the early or mid-17th century rather than 150 years later." The development of the English coal industry illustrates what Wrigley has in mind. Between 1561 and 1668, three-fourths of all English patents were related to the coal industry's problems, and one-seventh to drainage problems as the pits went deeper, leading to the invention of the first stationary steam engines in the years 1698 to 1702. The replacement of wood fuel by coal, the decisive technological change in the process of modernization, led to the expansion of the iron, glass, and pottery industries and to cheaper forms of bulk transport, first by coastal shipping, then by canals and railroads. Cheaper transport supplied London with food and fuel so efficiently that by the end of the 17th century it could become Europe's biggest city. As Johnson himself observes, "Europe was the first continent in which death rates began to fall substantially faster than birthrates," reinforcing the pressures that led to surging international migration and the concentration of people in towns and cities, another sign of modernity.

BUT to ask Johnson to have dealt fully with these long-term issues is to require too much of one who has already done an almost unbelievably great deal. One of Johnson's achievements here, as earlier in *Modern Times* and in his histories of Christianity and of the Jews, has been to extend the horizons of serious journalism at a time when we hear much agonizing about the future of the printed word, when the magazine business is in the dumps, and sales of serious books are held to be at an all-time low. That a book like this could be written, published, and sold profitably is itself a token of underlying cultural vitality and good taste. More to the point, however, is that few academics today would assume the intellectual (and financial) risks of producing a work of this kind—and few, one is compelled to add, can command the intellectual resources, the enthusiasm, or the narrative gifts displayed in this book.

Two hundred years ago, the great biographer James Boswell wrote of another Johnson (Samuel) that "he will be seen in this work more completely than any man who has ever lived. And he will be seen as he really was. . . ." In the same way, illuminating his copiously detailed story with drama and meaning, Paul Johnson has helped us understand the dynamics of modernization as they really were—even if its power and future direction remain a mystery. What is clear today is that failure to sustain the thrust of modernization imperils the survival of many complex societies and threatens a reversion of their populations to more archaic forms of civilization and mortality. *The Birth of the Modern* celebrates the brilliance of modernity's first great burst in the sky; reading it should make us aware of how much courage, understanding, and cooperation will be necessary if the modern enterprise is to be sustained and to develop.

Gendrification

THE GIRLS IN THE BALCONY: WOMEN, MEN AND THE NEW YORK TIMES. By NAN ROBERTSON. *Random House. 274 pp. $22.00.*

Reviewed by STEPHANIE GUTMANN

A JOURNALIST who has spent three decades of her life working at the New York *Times*, Nan Robertson was one of six women who in the mid-1970's sued the paper for "broad patterns and practices of sex discrimination," thus becoming a main character in what she calls "the single most important collective event in the history of women at the New York *Times*." She is probably right about the significance of the event. Though the paper seems to have been an anxious-to-please affirmative-action employer even before the suit, after the mau-mauing it received in *Boylan* v. *The New York Times* (as the suit was titled), it emerged as the thoroughly race-and-gender obsessed institution it is today.

The plot goes roughly like this: in the early 70's, several women in the New York headquarters of the paper began to chafe at what they would eventually label sex discrimination, although Robertson is a little vague about what that means, especially as the core women plaintiffs all seem to have enjoyed relatively smooth and fast ascents. At the time of the filing, for example, Robertson had recently been dispatched to Paris to take on "the most challenging assignment of [her] career." Betsy Wade Boylan was the highest-paid copy editor on

STEPHANIE GUTMANN, *a new contributor, has worked at daily newspapers on both the East and West Coasts.*

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the newsroom floor. Grace Glueck, an arts columnist, had turned down a promotion to assistant metropolitan editor in charge of cultural news after fifteen months on the job—demanding of the newsroom, "Who do I have to f—— to get out of this?"

But chafe they did, and to remedy the situation they began to do things like sending memos of complaint and a petition to the publisher. To each of these gauntlets the *Times* management seems to have reacted swiftly, sympathetically, and accommodatingly. But this too was evidently unsatisfactory, and in 1973 the Women's Caucus, as the little group called itself, decided to hire a lawyer. The one they chose, Harriet Rabb, had already handled a class-action suit on behalf of women at *Newsweek* magazine—during this same period, sex-discrimination suits or Equal Employment Opportunity complaints were also being filed at *Time*, the *Reader's Digest*, the Washington *Post*, *Newsday*, the Associated Press, and NBC—and she ridiculed the caucus members for their overly ladylike bargaining tactics. "Don't think of this company as the liberal New York *Times*, think of it as the Georgia Power company," she urged them. "They don't treat their women any differently."

In November 1974, the caucus filed suit, charging the *Times* with "discrimination against women on the basis of their sex in recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, and conditions of employment." Soon, the plaintiffs found themselves in the purgatory of litigation. To justify differences in salary and promotion, the *Times* was required to open personnel files, air personal memos, and make franker and franker appraisals of employees' talents. After four years of this—with the rhetoric getting nastier and nastier and with relationships between editors and writers who had worked together for years becoming more and more strained—both sides agreed to settle out of court to avoid a trial and any further blackening of reputations.

The terms included a settlement of $350,000 for (depending on which side you were on) "back pay" or "annuities." Most importantly, it provided for an even more assiduous, court-monitored affirmative-action hiring plan. The company agreed to try to appoint one woman for every eight men in its top corporate positions and to try to hire one woman for every four men in the newspaper's editorial and business departments.

ROBERTSON's book is much more than a rehearsal (and a rather sour and tractlike one at that) of legal history. In fact, the best parts are the padding, consisting of spirited profiles of women at the *Times* that incidentially provide a nice picture of daily newspaper life and types.

Exhaustively researched from diaries, interviews, and archives, these profiles build affection for the women of the *Times*, many of whom will appear later in the legal drama. But what the profiles are also supposed to do, and what they do not do, is convince the reader that a sex-discrimination suit was a burning necessity. Try as Robertson does to build a picture of a pattern of discrimination, what really comes through is how sexy a place the *Times* was and—especially—what a good time everybody had when women first began sifting in numbers into its all-male newsrooms. As one reporter recalled her first day:

> The city room lay in front of me as I entered a masculine domain. I found myself the lone female in a sea of male reporters. . . . I hardly dared savor the glory. All those men. . . . Suddenly I was placed in equal position with a man in a profession I believed hallowed. I also dared the fleeting thought that among all these masculine forms perhaps I would find a husband.

"The masculine forms," Robertson writes, "straightened from their habitual slouches, electrified" at the sight of her.

This is hardly to say that men did not resist women's entry to the newspaper field. But there were a variety of reasons for the resistance. One of the impulses was pro-

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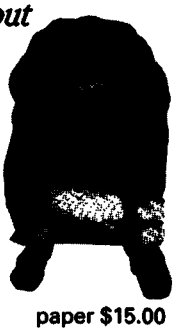

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tective. Old-style newspaper work was physically grueling, undignified, and in some ways defeminizing. It involved standing out in the rain, chasing people down the street, hanging out with policemen and criminals.

And there was the status question. Before 1965 or thereabouts, journalism was seen as a sleazy, dishonest profession—and many of the men liked it that way. It was a place where boys could be boys. The influx of women happened at about the same time that the Woodwards and Bernsteins came bounding in, at about the same time that journalism began to be professionalized, cleaned up. Thus, the resistance to women may have been less to women *per se* than to the arrival of a cleaner, more respectable type of journalist.

In fact, it is possible to see from Robertson's own account that the main feeling in the newly integrated workplace, on the part of men and women alike, was less outright resistance than ambivalence, tinged with sexual excitement. On Betsy Wade Boylan's first day on the copy desk, someone in the "sea of men" removed the spittoons from the floor and—in an attempt at welcome—put a ruffle around her paste pot. The men she worked with fell into three categories, Boylan later recalled. There were those who muttered, "The place is getting to be a bloody tea party, not like the old days." A second group was "too kind": she could not "struggle twenty seconds with a headline before someone would present her with his version, all done up with alternate word choices." The third "just toiled away and ignored her," though every once in a while someone would tell a clean joke "to make [her] feel less like a temperance worker at a brewery picnic."

What does all this have to do with the rash of sex-discrimination suits of the 70's? At the *Times* and elsewhere, men and women found themselves squashed close together in a highly charged environment. The relationships, the feelings about the place and about one's work grew very intense. The *Times* in particular was a way of life, not just a place to pick up a paycheck. It is impossible not to see in the mass of details that Robertson has collected that the women of the early 70's caught themselves falling in love with their work, with their co-workers, with their bosses. Barriers had to be erected. Encouraged by the rhetoric of the time, they decided that they had "been had."

THE ugliness of the ensuing legal fight—which both sides often refer to as "like a divorce"—ensured that things at the *Times* would never be the same again. But instead of geting easier, relations seem if anything to have gotten worse. The level of sheer testiness at the paper today is exemplified by the woman senior editor who reported to Robertson that she and her colleagues have been "keeping track of the number of times they had been interrupted" by men at meetings. (Executive Editor Max Frankel, when apprised of their "findings," at first "reacted with incredulity and then promised to do better.") Another complained to Robertson that "managerial meetings on the news floor at the *Times* had given her anxiety attacks and sent her into therapy." Perceived slights proliferate, and in general the *Times* is well on its way to the brave new world of "gender bias awareness," in which the more subtle varieties of alleged sexism are identified and purged.

As an institution, meanwhile, the *Times* has continued on its course of steady appeasement. In the area of hiring, the paper's new publisher, forty-one-year-old Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., told Robertson that in his regime "managers would be judged more and more on the effectiveness with which they hired and encouraged a diverse work force." As I learned recently from speaking to a representative of the *Times*, the paper's policy has in fact "evolved into something that's more aggressive than a simple quota approach. In every single case we try to make sure that we look at females and minorities for every position in the news department." The seriousness with which this policy is taken, according to the spokesman, is reflected in the fact that "in the last twelve months 53 percent of the new hires in the news department have been women and minorities. We're on track with our goals, at least in the last year." Were managers who failed to find female or minority hires penalized? I asked. Was this failure the kind of thing that would be mentioned in a yearly review or a personnel file? At this the spokesman seemed to get offended. "We don't need sanctions," I was told. "This is something we enthusiastically embrace."

No doubt they do. And no doubt, too, women at the *Times* are sincere in their belief that (in the words of one of Robertson's informants) "we are drowned out, not listened to, . . . dismissed, passed over." Thus do affirmative-action regimes make monkeys of us all. The only question is, what else did anyone expect?

Roadmap

LAW AND MORALITY IN ISRAEL'S WAR WITH THE PLO. By WILLIAM V. O'BRIEN. *Routledge. 342 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by ALLAN GERSON

AT THE Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal an iron distinction was drawn between "*ius ad bellum*"—the law governing the initiation of war—and "*ius in bello*"—the law governing the conduct of war. According to the Tribunal, the wartime conduct of the Nazis had to be assessed independently of the fact that their recourse to war was unjust.

As historical irony would have it, that decision has become critical to any understanding and assessment of Israel's conduct in its military administration of the West Bank and Gaza, particularly as this relates to such controversial matters as the deportation of suspected

ALLAN GERSON *is professor of international law and transactions at George Mason University. His latest book is* The Kirkpatrick Mission: Diplomacy Without Apology *(Free Press).*

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saboteurs and terrorists, collective punishment, demolition of homes, and other practices which have engendered considerable friction between Israel and the White House, to say nothing of its relations with the United Nations and the rest of the world. For the reasoning behind the Nuremberg decision, which also lies at the heart of the modern law of belligerent occupation, is that while belligerents are unlikely to come to agreement on whether the party initiating hostilities acted justly or unjustly, they might nevertheless agree on applicable standards governing the conduct of war and military occupation. On this slim reed rests the promise of international law as a constructive tool for helping belligerents bridge their differences.

Unfortunately, however, the United Nations has never accepted the distinction between *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*—at least when it comes to Israel's governance of the West Bank and Gaza. Almost invariably, any UN examination of Israel's conduct in those areas has been premised on the idea that its very presence is that of a "racist usurper." From this it follows, as the Soviet representative to the UN Security Council once put it, that

> The struggle of the courageous Arab patriots to liberate their lands . . . is as just, justifiable, and legitimate as the struggle of the heroic African freedom fighters to liberate their territories and the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Southern Rhodesia, and Guinea [Bisaau] from the white racist and fascist oppressors who have usurped their native lands.

It also follows that in their just struggle, the uprooted Palestinians can do no wrong. The flip side of the coin is that Israel can do no right.

This being so, one might reasonably conclude that any UN resolutions dealing with the conduct of Israel's military administration are inherently tainted, not only because they are wrong on the causes of the conflict, but precisely because they fail to follow the Nuremberg injunction to distinguish between the causes of conflict and its management. Yet William V. O'Brien, a professor of government at Georgetown University and a long-time student of "just-war" doctrine—he is the author of *The Conduct of Just and Limited War* (1981)—holds a different view. With the UN, he disputes the modern theory separating *ius ad bellum* from *ius in bello*, seeing it necessary to judge all such matters in their full context. But if he agrees methodologically with UN jurisprudence, he parts company with it substantively—in fact, he abhors it. On questions of both *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*, he comes out on the other side.

Here are the conclusions O'Brien draws:

1. *Ius ad bellum* (initiation of war): All of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions from 1953 on, but especially those dating from 1972 when Israel was condemned for taking counterterrorist action in the wake of the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics (the perpetrators escaped without reprimand), "lack both realism and fairness." Whereas PLO terrorist attacks are treated by the UN as isolated incidents and not as part of an ongoing war, Israel's responses are always deemed unnecessary or disproportionate—the twin tests of legality in the use of force.

Concerning Israel's 1982 Lebanon operations, O'Brien writes:

> For those for whom international law is deduced from the resolutions of organizations like the Security Council and the official pronouncements of states, Israel's 1982 Lebanon war was not a permissible exercise of self-defense. For those, including myself, for whom international law is deduced from fundamental principles such as the right of self-defense and state practice as evidenced by the pat-

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> terns of state behavior and expectations, the 1982 Lebanon war was a war that was . . . reluctantly tolerated and whose principal end was accepted.

That principal end O'Brien defines as self-defense, not against a few terrorist attacks on Israel itself but against "the PLO's war with Israel [that] has always been waged on a worldwide basis."

2. *Ius in bello* (the conduct of war and occupation): After careful study of Israel's nine best-known counterterror operations, O'Brien concludes, notwithstanding the positions taken at the UN Security Council, that those operations "were reasonably proportionate and discriminate." Similarly, and this applies as well to the issue of alleged Israeli complicity in the Sabra and Shatila massacres,

> whatever the prudence of Israel's decision to drive the PLO out of southern Lebanon and Beirut and whatever the disappointments of Israelis with the long-term effects of the war, it was fought with reasonable conformity with the laws of war.

Of Israel's administration of the West Bank and Gaza, and its handling of the *intifada*, O'Brien writes:

> I consider that all the violent means of coercion employed by Israel [including deportation and collective punishment] are legally permissible if used in conformity with the principles of proportion and discrimination. As an overall assessment of Israel's coercive measures in combatting the *intifada*, I conclude that Israel has not been guilty of deliberate widespread violations of the law of belligerent occupation as it should be realistically applied to a unique situation.

IN THIS book, William O'Brien proves himself a just judge, even-handedly applying relevant criteria while clearly identifying his own prejudices. The book is important precisely for these reasons, being impartial, analytic, and well-reasoned. It is a useful guide for anyone struggling with the issues of law and morality as they pertain to the rights and wrongs of the Israel-PLO struggle.

My quarrel, such as it is, with O'Brien's exercise has to do with the dangers of introducing the question of who initiated hostilities into an analysis of acts taken by a military administration. I hark back to the Nuremberg decision, with which I agree: to the extent that international law can prove useful in helping belligerents to bridge their differences, it can do so only on the level of *ius in bello*. It remains, after all, nearly impossible to reconcile Zionism, which affirms Israel's right to exist as a state, and Palestinian nationalism, which denies it.

I have to admit, though, that the effort to keep such questions separate from questions about the legitimacy of specific acts of the military occupation has also proven futile. Take the issue of settlements. The modern law of belligerent occupation is premised on the notion that occupied territory must be returned in the context of a peace treaty, and that in the interim a deep freeze must occur which will preserve intact the laws and institutions of the territory's former sovereign. But the West Bank presents a novel situation. When Jordan ruled the area between 1949 and 1967, no state (except for Pakistan and Britain) ever recognized its sovereignty there, and now this former "sovereign" has itself disavowed its claim. The Palestinians residing in the territory have refused—until at best very recently—to make peace with Israel, and *their* claim to sovereignty over this territory is suspect. Certainly, Israel's claim under international law is at least as strong.

Strictly construed, the *ius in bello* rule of maintaining the status quo ante would preclude large-scale Jewish settlements in the region, on the theory that changes in the status quo hinder the prospects of peace-making. Yet as Palestinian delegates to the current peace talks have admitted, massive Jewish settlement activity has spurred rather than hindered their participation in those talks.

In truth, neither O'Brien's "just-war" theory nor the traditional international law of belligerent occupation seems to work very well in getting us out of the conundrums of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nevertheless, there is ample reason to be grateful for what O'Brien has given us: a roadmap around the legal claims and counterclaims which permeate the history of the conflict and which have been vividly on display in the various rounds of peace talks past, present, and no doubt future.

Policing Literature

THE COLUMBIA HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN NOVEL. EMORY ELLIOTT, General Editor. *Columbia University Press. 905 pp. $59.95.*

Reviewed by EVELYN TOYNTON

TO JUDGE by the essays collected in this volume, one of the chief attractions of multiculturalism, for the professors at least, is that it relieves them of the arduous labor of thinking. One can plough through fully 90 percent of these pages without stumbling upon a single original idea, a single unpredictable judgment. Instead, in chapter after chapter, over 30 different contributors process literature through a ready-made system, trotting out the same solemn dogma about the sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia of America in general and American novels in particular. Indeed, the numbing repetitiveness one encounters here—in chapters titled "Gender and Fiction," "Nation, Region, and Empire," "Ethnicity and the Marketplace," "Race and Region," "Constructing Gender," "Society and Identity," etc.—gives a whole new meaning to the PC tenet that a "text" is the product not of an individual consciousness but of the times in which it is produced.

The central arguments of *The Columbia History* are as follows: life in America has been and continues to be hell on earth for 75 percent of the populace (women,

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EVELYN TOYNTON *reviewed* Edna St. Vincent Millay: Selected Poems *in our last issue.*

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blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, homosexuals). In the field of literature, the straight-white-male elite has always controlled the means of production—the publishing industry—and has therefore been able to impose its exclusionary, bourgeois standards of value. That being so, books that make it their business to expose the hideous vileness and corruption of American society, and that do somehow manage to get published, are to be praised; books that do not must be taken to task, unless they perform some other socially useful function. Thus, Elizabeth Ammons of Tufts University is willing to forgive Willa Cather, even though she was "deeply racist and ethnocentric, . . . she ignored living Native Americans in favor of celebrating dead ones," because at least her novels have the virtue of being "covert explorations of same-sex love."

In his introduction, Emory Elliott, the book's general editor, explicitly tells us that in its pages, such attributes as "intricate but orderly structure, the details of characterization, the profundity of themes, the complexity of imagery, symbolism, and allusions, and the power of the setting to evoke particular places, eras, or subtleties of human speech" will not be used as "criteria of greatness." By overthrowing these standards, the multiculturalists claim to open the way to a less narrow set of judgments. A similar goal is to be reached by including all the Americas (Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, etc.). One might therefore have expected to find in this survey generous appreciations of all sorts of works. But in fact nothing could be narrower than the standard applied here: does the work under discussion actively promote social revolution, or does it not?

For example, according to Michael T. Gilmore of Brandeis University, even though the work of Herman Melville "engages . . . directly with the issues of his time—among other things, he wrote on slavery, class, imperialism, and the destruction of the Native American," Melville is still deserving of reproach because "the ever-present ironies and ambiguities dissipate external purpose. . . . Melville's fictions awaken awareness of social injustice but leave the reader with no thought of changing things. (In this regard, he is [Harriet Beecher] Stowe's opposite.)" In keeping with the general approach of the *Columbia History*, Gilmore seems quite uninterested in the other difference between Melville and Stowe—the way in which Melville's "ironies and ambiguities" lend his work a richness and depth that Stowe's entirely lacks.

The standard being what it is, Grace Metalious, author of that literary classic *Peyton Place*, meets with more favor here than Melville. According to David Van Leer of the University of California, *Peyton Place*'s "willingness to treat clinically such topics as abortion and menstruation marked its interest in naturalizing the then sensational topic of female sexuality," while "its depiction of successful women at work belied its own tendency to represent women as ruled by emotion." Joining Metalious on Van Leer's list of acceptable writers are Rona Jaffe, author of *The Best of Everything* ("in her heroine Caroline Bender, Jaffe offered a proto-feminist revision of Theodore Dreiser's 'Sister' Caroline Meeber") and, more surprisingly, John Cheever, whose "revisionist *Falconer*" redeems him in Van Leer's eyes: "Evidently even his previous focus on straight love had been merely conventional, without meaning to affirm the normative quality of heterosexuality."

It may be his alleged homosexuality that keeps Henry James, too, from being denounced in this volume. Where one might expect to see him condemned as the ultimate aesthete and snob, an author of reactionary novels that impugn the motives of feminists and revolutionaries, instead one finds Robert Shulman of the University of Washington bringing James into the fold as a critic of consumer capitalism. *The Portrait of a Lady*, we are told, exposes "not metaphysical evil but the socially constructed evil of a society that places money above everything."

It is frightening to imagine the fate of the college students being introduced to literature by these people. Wisdom and enlightenment are nowhere mentioned, aesthetic pleasure is just a bourgeois construct, and the idea of beauty is an "exclusionary" strategy used as a tool of repression. One of the multiculturalists' most highly touted rediscoveries has been Rebecca Harding Davis's novel, *Life in the Iron Mills*, which chronicles the thwarted life of Hugo Wolfe, a consumptive "puddler" in a steel mill who longs to create something of beauty. But, in a particularly telling passage, Shulman objects both to Davis's description of the iron workers as suffering "a reality of soul-starvation, of living death" and to her statement that Hugo Wolfe has "a groping passion for whatever was beautiful and pure." Such characterizations, it seems, "denigrate [Wolfe's] own class" and reflect an "etherealized, middle-class aesthetics that equates 'the beautiful' and 'the pure.'" It might be instructive to sentence Professor Shulman to a term of living in Hugo Wolfe's dank lodgings and working in the mill—would his admirable lack of class prejudice enable him to discover beauty there, one wonders, or would he speedily retreat to his suburban home and his nice clean office at the university?

Interestingly, only one contributor—Ed Cohen of Rutgers University—specifically refers to the pleasures of reading. In an essay entitled "Constructing Gender," Cohen tells us, "As a sensitive, intellectual, myopic [Jewish] child . . . residing in the emphatically non-Jewish, emphatically non-intellectual, suburbanizing countryside of Maryland, books were the only place I felt at home."

Although this (ungrammatical) interjection of autobiography seems inappropriate in a scholarly essay, after wading through hundreds of pages about "hegemony," "privileging," and "commodifying," one is grateful to be confronted with a human voice, however eccentric. And so one reads on even as Cohen launches into a bizarre tale of his bouts with "a seri-

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ous inflammatory bowel disease that kept [him] moving between toilets and hospitals in an unconscious attempt to give material form to the emotional pain that flowed through [him]." Alas, it turns out that the real point of these confessions is to convey just how pre-1970's literature failed Cohen by not "foregrounding" homosexual love in a way that he could "relate" to; various heterosexual writers of the past are now supposed to take the blame not only for their racism, sexism, classism, and elitist aesthetics, but also for not having had the decency to bolster the self-esteem of Ed Cohen.

Apart from the hapless Cohen, there are two contributors whose essays do not appear to have been written by a machine: Robert Boyers, in a chapter on the avant-garde, is almost shocking in his neglect of class, gender, race, and economic issues and his emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of the books under discussion. (It is likewise shocking to find anyone in this company dismissing, as Boyers does, "the idiot ejaculations and glib spontaneities of would-be vanguardists like Jack Kerouac.") And Cornel West's essay on postmodern culture gives some inkling of what an intelligent critique of the current "cultural situation" might look like; West is hardly less hostile to America than the others, but at least his points are thoughtful, he does not sound self-righteous, he acknowledges the importance of talent and quality, and his prose is crisp and energetic.

One wonders why many of these contributors have chosen to teach literature rather than social science, since their interests seem to lie entirely in the behavior of groups and the progress of social movements. The very essence of literature, however universal its themes—and I do not mean the themes of race, class, and gender, but rather those of passion, betrayal, spiritual struggle, as well as, in Orwell's phrase, "the pressure of circumstance on character"—is that it presents us with individual human beings and not with classes of beings. Nor does its morality consist of explicit calls to action—George Eliot, in the breadth of her compassion, is a much greater moralist than Harriet Beecher Stowe. That function has always been left to propaganda—precisely what *The Columbia History of the American Novel* is proposing that literature should be.

One can only feel grateful that these proselytizers were not in control of the means of production when Melville was trying to publish *Moby-Dick*. If they had been, Melville's ironies and ambiguities might have been replaced with rallying cries to revolutionary action. And one can only hope that the students of these academics will somehow discover for themselves the complex and ultimately private pleasure of being moved by a great work of art.

Beyond Assimilation?

SAVING REMNANTS: FEELING JEWISH IN AMERICA. By SARA BERSHTEL and ALLEN GRAUBARD. *Free Press. 333 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD NORDEN

THE authors of this grim book worked on it, they say, for twelve years. It is a believable claim: in number and variety, the Jews interviewed in its pages could hardly have been tracked down overnight. Besides, several of the factoids supplied by Bershtel-Graubard, though true back when Jimmy Carter was President, are false today. ("The total number of American Jews," for example, "is almost twice the number of Jews living in Israel.") And yet, *Saving Remnants* is not dated, for the authors are on to something which people with eyes in their heads have known for a generation and which continues to worry them, namely, that after many false alarms, the American melting pot is really working, at least for Jews.

Choice, not duress, makes it bubble. Yet the outcome of choice adds up, for Bershtel-Graubard, to a question mark hanging over the future of the Jewish community in the U.S. Their book gives no comfort, offers no encouragement, retails no solutions. In making its depressing sociological and cultural argument, it depends heavily on long self-portraits of living-and-breathing types, a picture gallery of recognizable, fairly sad, occasionally admirable real-life heroes and heroines.

The mini-confessions by named and pseudonymous interviewees sometimes ring comically true. Listen to David Biale, a professor with an interest in (as he himself puts it) "Jewish [and] leftist political things":

> I have two sisters. One is in Chabad [the movement of Lubavitch Hasidim], in London. She went into it here in Berkeley. She's been in it for ten years, and is married with three kids. My other sister is married to a Chicano construction worker, lives in the desert outside L.A., and has no interest in either Jewish or leftist political things. Both their lives are rejections of what our home was like, whereas I'm basically replicating my father's position. We all gathered in Los Angeles last summer when my father was dying. There were these three hasidic kids, and my Berkeley kids, and these two half-Chicano kids. It was crazy.

Who could quarrel with that last judgment? Or fail to recognize "Sam Silverman," an ex-baseball fan? Sam is married to a Japanese woman and says, "I felt very bad when the Dodgers went [from Brooklyn] to Los Angeles. . . . I feel about as bad about the decline of Judaism in the United States." Other authentic voices are more intelligent, if less funny.

But it is not bleakness that makes *Saving Remnants* so trying. What is a trial are the pages and pages given over by Bershtel-Graubard to building a distinction: between, on the one hand, assimilation as it has usually been understood and, on the other hand, what is happening to more and more Jews from Harvard Square to Thousand Oaks.

EDWARD NORDEN, *whose article, "Counting the Jews," appeared in our October 1991 issue, is currently working on a book about the future of the Jews.*

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Behind the distinction lurks the old belief that America is a unique phenomenon in Jewish history. An "assimilated" Jew in Europe, say the authors, got that way under the pressure of anti-Semitism, self-hatred, or both. Once assimilated, and whether or not converted, that Jew identified himself or tried to identify himself as anything but a Jew. In America, by contrast, although anti-Semitism can be found, it is small-time, no obstacle—you can be as Jewish as you like, and still go as far as your gifts, energy, and luck will take you in this, the most indifferent of big societies. Nothing obliges you to try to disappear into the chorus. You have—and for Bershtel-Graubard this is the heart of the matter—a free choice of virtually an infinite number of ways to live and imagine and distinguish and identify yourself, something Jews elsewhere and in other times never had.

So an American Jew with no ties to the Jewish community can still choose to "feel" Jewish, and it is therefore wrong, insist the authors, to label such people, who form the majority of American Jews and of whom there are more all the time, "assimilated." The label they offer for this new type is "unaffiliated"—i.e., one who does not officially belong or pay his dues yet is open about and unashamed of his origins and whose familiar, chronic guilt and unease about the results of his choices are the paradoxical evidence that he has not really cut himself off. "Being unaffiliated," say Bershtel-Graubard, "does not preclude strong and prideful assertions of Jewish identification." More than one interviewee who does nothing else Jewish makes such assertions.

Is IT true that the U.S. in the last generation has been an unprecedentedly tolerant setting for Jews, giving them more choices and facing them with fewer "brutal bargains" than ever in their history? Well, maybe. Comparisons would have to be made, not only with colonial America but with England after the enfranchisement and Garibaldi's Italy, comparisons not attempted by the authors because they would go beyond the scope of their focus. But let us say it is true. Let us also stipulate that the growing bulk of American Jews who know neither Yiddish nor Hebrew, do not belong to a synagogue, do not give to a Jewish charity, do not expose their children to any Jewish education, and do bless them as they intermarry, are properly to be called unaffiliated, not assimilated. What difference does it make for the future of the Jews here? Very little, really.

The fact is that in the Diaspora, the Jews have been able to survive in the long run only as a community or communities of parents raising Jewish children who intermarry at their peril. This should be obvious, but for those who believe American Jews are immune to the laws of the Diaspora, or who distrust their impressions, the recent National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) has confirmed that demographically, assimilation and disaffiliation lead to the same thing, namely, a shrinking number of Jews who identify themselves as such. Bershtel-Graubard mention the NJPS, which was published at the tail end of their labors, just once, in a footnote.

The authors, however, are nobody's fools. On the basis of the knowledge they picked up during all those years in the field, they too know that theirs is a distinction without a practical difference. "When it comes to the fundamental questions of choosing a spouse or transmitting one's culture and community to offspring, Jewishness remains marginal, at best, for the unaffiliated." So that while Bershtel-Graubard consider unaffiliated Jews neither disturbed nor bad, while they argue that they are in no way culpable, they do seem to realize that most children of the unaffiliated will not even feel Jewish. This can only hasten what the authors themselves describe as the collective end-product of, yes, assimilation—"the dissolution of the community."

WHAT about the large minority of American Jews who still, formally anyway, belong? Can the dues-paying members of Reform temples and Conservative, Orthodox, and hasidic synagogues retard "the trend to disaffiliation"? Is there a "strong and vital Jewish community, whose culture, religion, and forms of solidarity would attract commitment and loyalty" out there? It must be said to the authors' credit that for them this question is not transparently rhetorical. After presenting the realities and the voices, they actually do try to answer it.

Their answer is that for the most part, there is less to the Reform and Conservative movements, to which nine out of ten affiliated American Jews belong, than meets the eye. Growing membership lists are deceptive, say Bershtel-Graubard. The Judaism of their Reform and Conservative interviewees, including rabbis, adds up to little more than a species of liberalism—it no longer has anything to do with the bedrock of faith, God, destiny, history. And the culture provided after religious services, or in place of them, is only a copy of American upper-middlebrow culture generally, a thin, vaporous gruel.

According to Bershtel-Graubard, what remains for the Reform and Conservative movements is nothing truly religious or distinctively cultural but only residually ethnic. Its prime expression is solidarity with Israel, not Zionism but "Israelism," a taboo on saying anything uncomplimentary about Israel within earshot of Gentiles. Here is one of the places where the authors let whatever bias they have get the better of them. For the truth is that increasingly during their twelve-year odyssey of research, they must have seen and heard Israel berated, not only from Reform pulpits but on op-ed pages and TV shows where rabbis and other affiliated Jews, far from censoring themselves, have begged their non-Jewish fellow Americans not to associate them with those nasty Israelis. But never mind—on the general point the authors may be more correct than not in contending that the dams raised by the Reform and Conservative networks do not seem to have what it takes

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to keep Jews, especially young Jews, from continuing to seep away.

Then what about Orthodoxy? Bershtel-Graubard hear the Orthodox out with respect and write about them with savvy. If masses of American Jews were going back to the old-time religion, this book would be entirely different, maybe would never have been conceived. But that is not happening. The ballyhooed revival of Orthodoxy amounts, demographically, to no more than this—that the Orthodox "are holding their own." Few are the American Jews not born and raised Orthodox who do the about-face. The Orthodox themselves, especially the women, are still impaled on the horns of the old dilemma—Torah-true Judaism or modernity?—and numbers of men and women born into the one are continuing to opt for the other. Anyway, even if the Orthodox can go on holding their own, they certainly cannot stem the overall trend. Which is also true, in spades, of the "fundamentalists," the Hasidim and their born-again recruits.

IT IS hard, after all this, to figure out which Jews or group of Jews are being referred to in the authors' title. What is the "remnant" from which salvation will flow? In their penultimate section, "The Revival," Bershtel-Graubard introduce us to the people closest to their own taste: the yuppie-ish, loosely Orthodox couples and singles of Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan; the Aquarian Jews in Berkeley; the feminists, the lesbians and gays—all inventing new Jewish activities and communities in the New World. The authors' hearts are with these people, and they obviously wish them the best. But their heads tell them that it cannot work. Some *kashrut* now and again, women strapping on *tefillin*, a collage of the ancient and the perishably brand-new—finally, this indefatigable "creativity" is "expressive of the very forces of dissolution it hopes to stem."

And so it must be, for the genius of the so-called revival is nothing more than the freedom to choose, nothing other than the inalienable, profoundly American freedom to change one's mind and style in order to become, if not positively happy, at least, for a time, less unhappy. But will the grandchildren of these "creative" Jews feel or be any more Jewish than those of the stick-in-the mud unaffiliated and affiliated?

> When choice permeates all commitments, the conditions for the maintenance and continuity of a separate historical community of faith are inevitably undermined. . . . Creativity is problematic as a basis for establishing stable institutions and providing continuity over generations.

Saving Remnants, precisely because it comes from a quarter sympathetic to the left-wing revivalists, may be received in those precincts as an unwished-for diagnosis. Indeed, of the two best-known treatments of American Jews published during the authors' long period of research—Charles Silberman's cheery *A Certain People* (1985) and Arthur Hertzberg's *The Jews in America* (1989)—the implicit conclusion of *Saving Remnants* is closer to Hertzberg, who explicitly predicts the imminent end of American Jewish history. Bershtel-Graubard, letting their readers put two and two together, say no more than the following in their short epilogue:

> Identity, formerly objective and imposed, has become constructed and chosen—Jewish identity, like all others. There can be no return from this disposition to choose. The future of American Jews will continue to be determined by the place that individualism, modernity, and choice afford to Judaism—not the other way around.

We mourn the death of

Sherry Abel

A cherished colleague and dear friend who served

on the editorial staff of COMMENTARY

for many years.

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